

Edited by  
E Haldeman-Julius

**B-567**

# **Adventures in the Realm of Ideas**

**AND OTHER ESSAYS IN THE FIELDS OF PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE,  
POLITICAL ECONOMY, THEOLOGY, HUMANISM,  
SEMANTICS, AGNOSTICISM, IMMORTALITY  
AND RELATED SUBJECTS**

**By VICTOR S. YARROS**



# **Adventures in the Realm of Ideas**

**AND OTHER ESSAYS IN THE FIELDS OF PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE,  
POLITICAL ECONOMY, THEOLOGY, HUMANISM,  
SEMANTICS, AGNOSTICISM, IMMORTALITY  
AND RELATED SUBJECTS**

**By VICTOR S. YARROS**

**HALDEMAN-JULIUS PUBLICATIONS  
GIRARD, KANSAS**



The essays and reviews in this volume originally appeared in such periodicals as Unity, The Journal of Social Philosophy, The Social Frontier, The Humanist, and The Christian Leader, to whom we express thanks for the right to reprint.

**Copyright, 1947,  
By E. Haldeman-Julius**

**Printed in United States of America**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Adventures in the Realm of Ideas .....	5
Curious Arguments for Immortality .....	10
We Are Making Progress .....	14
Psychoanalysis Discovers Social Reform! .....	16
War: Causes and Cures .....	19
Humanizing Political Economy .....	23
Humanism and Its Mansions .....	25
Sense—Nonsense—Semantics .....	27
Why Democracy Often Fails .....	30
The Making of Many Books .....	32
Our Age of Unreason—And After .....	40
Good Will and Intellectual Power .....	43
Ethics and Two Nihilisms .....	46
Parties and the Democratic Principles .....	50
The Persistence of Utopian Thinking .....	53
Editorial Writers as Hessians .....	59
Anti-Semitism: What to Do About It .....	62
Needed Educational Reforms .....	66
Benjamin R. Tucker and Philosophical Anarchism .....	69
What is Left of Marxism? .....	75







## ADVENTURES IN THE REALM OF IDEAS

To die ignorant, said Carlyle, that is the real tragedy. To live without what the Germans call a *Weltanschauung* — a philosophy of the world and our place in it — is just as tragic. Life without ideals and general ideas is certainly not abundant: it is drab, trivial, petty, almost sub-human. This is why John Morley advised young people to attach themselves as early as possible to a cause or movement worthy of the deepest devotion. Spinoza, long before, had given the same advice.

Ideas evolve. Philosophies grow and undergo modifications, but in my case, at any rate, the same essential philosophy has been operative and dominant all through a long life.

At the age of 17, I was drawn into the Russian revolutionary movement, joining a provincial branch of the party which had for its slogan, "Land and liberty"—land for the peasants, liberty for all. We regarded ourselves as Socialists in economics and liberals in politics. We worked for the Four Freedoms. We read forbidden, underground literature and knew the elements of Socialism as expounded by Fourier and Marx. We leaned toward Marxism, as it seemed less Utopian and more scientific.

Two years later, in America, under the influence of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Reclus, Most, and others, whose books and pamphlets criticized Marx and emphasized liberterianism, I became a Communist-Anarchist, though Communism was only an ideal. The nearer goal was Socialism, but Socialism *without the State*. Statism was "the enemy." Since power corrupts, a strong state meant a tyrannical and corrupt state. Hence society was conceived in terms of free, autonomous, and federated communes.

Five years later, meantime having studied Mill and Spencer, I was attracted by the so-called Boston School of Pacific and Philosophical Anarchism. This school stood for the gradual *abolition* of the State, its definition of the term State being aggression upon the non-consenting, non-invasive individual who fully respected the equal liberty of others but demanded recognition of his right to ignore the government, to refuse to pay taxes, or to perform military service, except on a strictly voluntary basis so far as he was concerned. These ideas were in part Spencerian and in part Proudhonian. They were described as unterrified Jeffersonian democracy and consistent, logical Individualism as taught by Thoreau and Emerson.

The individual, according to this school, was the sovereign, and not any accidental majority. Majority rule, it held, was as vicious and irrational as minority rule or the rule of an autocrat or oligarch. In the words of Proudhon, order was "the daughter, not the mother, of liberty," and social cooperation in a variety of desirable and proper forms could best be developed without any element of compulsion. People, the argument ran, were reasonable enough to work together for such ends as police and fire protection, traffic regulation, flood control, sanitation and hygiene, and the like, and also reasonable enough to pay fair rates for such services. The systems of voluntary insurance were striking instances of cooperation without compulsion, and these systems were capable of indefinite expansion.

The Boston Anarchists were opposed to violence and advocated passive resistance to the exactions and encroachments of the State. They proposed strikes against taxes and against rent. They favored propaganda by such strictly passive methods, including going to prison for violations of the laws they condemned on moral or practical grounds.



In their economic teachings the Anarchists were Marxists. They considered, with Marx, interest, rent, and profits as forms of surplus value, or plain robbery sanctioned by plutocratic lawmakers. In politics, they followed Proudhon and the Syndicalists, boycotting elections and the ballot boxes.

Here was an appealing and logically unassailable gospel. Its lineage was distinguished, its chief apostles, past and present, were intellectual and moral giants. For nearly two decades I actively preached this consistent, lofty gospel. Then doubts and misgivings began to trouble me. Logic is not test of truth. Life is not a laboratory. Human nature is not simple. Progress is not certain, steady, uninterrupted. Is not Philosophical Anarchism *too* logical? Does it not rest on dubious assumptions concerning human nature and human conduct? Are men always reasonable, and is it possible for order, justice, and progress to dispense entirely with the element of compulsion or coercion? Men are not wholly selfish, but are they not selfish enough to evade responsibilities and obligations imposed not arbitrarily by other men but by the very conditions of life in society, a nation, a federated commonwealth? Can the majority in any community be expected to tolerate non-cooperation on the part of obstinate, perverse, recalcitrant minorities and confer substantial benefits on them without obtaining any return? An individual may be non-invasive and yet thoroughly unsocial, parasitic, undesirable. What community would permit him to indulge his notions of an ideal State?

Granted that some day, in the distant future, a society *may* come into existence which will fulfill that exalted ideal, the ideal of complete, voluntary altruism, what relevance has that remote possibility to the needs, problems, and burdens of our time and our imperfect society? The Philosophical Anarchists forgot the present and dwelt mentally in a theoretical future. They reckoned without time, space, and circumstances.

True, if this was pointed out to them, they assured you that they were *not* Utopians; that they knew very well that progress toward their goal would be slow, perhaps very slow; and that they rejoiced in small steps toward their goal. For example, they believed in free trade but realized that the masses were opposed to that policy, and therefore they would welcome moderate reductions of protective duties. Again, they believed in free banking but knew that they could not prevail upon any congress to repeal *all* the restrictions upon banking and, therefore, would be grateful for the repeal of the high tax on notes issued by state banks. They believed in private police systems, but admitted that the police function of government would be the last to go in favor of privately supported police forces, and meantime they were willing to pay taxes calculated to maintain an efficient police system.

These, of course, were sensible compromises with necessity. But the Philosophical Anarchists insisted that no measure be passed which in any degree *extended* the sphere of government or compulsion. Thus they objected to laws favoring trade unions, to laws shortening the hours of labor, regulating wages, or protective of women and children. These statutes were paternalistic and tended to intrench and strengthen the State. The slogan, they held, should be repeal, repeal and repeal; reduce government to a minimum. This attitude, far from being progressive, was in effect utterly reactionary. It played into the hands of the Bourbons and Tories. It gave aid and comfort to plutocracy. It was severely logical, at first sight, but it was not rational.

As a matter of fact, too often the defenders of plutocracy and monopoly have talked and written exactly as the Anarchists have. The Plutocrats hate government when it makes too many concessions to labor or to progressivism, or undertakes to curb greed and tyranny on the part of capital and finance. To special privilege, of which capital and Big Business are the beneficiaries, there is never any objection from that quarter.



The principal mistake made by the Anarchists was in their treatment of the State as such. They held, with Spencer, that the State was "conceived in aggression and maintained by aggression." If the State was a class institution, and the government was, as Marx put it, "the executive committee of the ruling clique," then, clearly, no good could ever be expected of it. But, whatever the *origin* of the State, it was absurd to assert that it was always and inevitably the instrument of privilege and monopoly, and must remain such under all conditions. The evidence glaringly contradicted that conception. The democratic governments have increasingly yielded to the pressure of farmers, wage workers, and middle-class reformers.

The hatred of our plutocrats and reactionaries for the New Deal is alone sufficient to dispose of the charge that the State is simply the tool of the economic oligarchy. In the past, the same interests bitterly fought Woodrow Wilson's reform program, and fought in vain. Under Cleveland the same interests were denounced by the President as "the communism of pelf" and in several clashes between the government and Big Business the latter suffered reverses and the cause of democracy scored victories. In short, the Marxian idea of the State was never valid, and in recent decades its arbitrary and fallacious character has been repeatedly demonstrated.

Where democracy is strong and mature, the State serves the interests of the masses, not of the classes. There is no reason to fear that this trend will be reversed in the future. Social and economic reforms demanded by an alert and intelligent electorate will be achieved through the State, despite the rage and clamor of the economic Tories.

These considerations and facts have radically altered the attitude of many former Anarchists toward legislation, the ballot box, and democratic government. These thinkers are fighting *plutocracy*, not the State, and are working for substantial reforms in the existing system side by side with Socialists, advanced liberals, and Communists of the evolutionary school. Some of them, like this writer, call themselves Democratic Collectivists and Humanists. They are not indifferent to liberty, but they do not agree with the timid and doctrinaire liberals who tell us that more collectivism means less freedom for labor and the individual citizen. Government acquisition and operation of the public utilities and essential industries need not entail intellectual slavery or suppression of civil rights and freedom. The State as employer, it must be recognized, is not as a rule more benevolent than a corporation for profit, or a private monopoly, but means and techniques have been devised—and more are sure to be devised with the accumulation of knowledge and experience—with the definite view of preventing government despotism, bureaucratic arrogance and conservatism, and resistance to new ideas. The opponents of more collectivism in industry and commerce have not evinced proper appreciation or comprehension of the important new techniques of modern democracy. They are too prejudiced to draw the right inferences from the remarkable success of the T.V.A., for example. Fear and dislike of bureaucracy and centralization prevent clear thinking on the vital question: How can we use government in new, constructive, and socially beneficial ways without inviting the abuses and evils long associated with dictatorships, military cabals, oligarchies, and aristocracies? Power is dangerous—but so is freedom, so is religion, so is virtue.

It has been apparent for many decades that the capitalistic order is breaking down, and that the next order, after the destruction of the malignant and utterly dishonest and savage substitutes for order, namely, Nazism and Fascism, will be largely socialist in essence and principle. Democratic Collectivism has evolved in the course of the last quarter of a century in response to the demand for a system designed to promote economic security and economic prosperity *without* sacrificing liberty and human dignity. The solution is not complete, but it is



infinitely superior to any other proposed and advocated by conservatives, *laissez-faire* liberals, or orthodox Socialists. Take the position of those who favor what they call the mixed economic system, a system in which free, competitive enterprise flourishes side by side with regulated public utilities, state-operated industries, cooperative plants, and the like. In England, the same school uses the phrase "half-way house" for this sort of system, to distinguish it from total, or 100 percent, Socialism. The mixed economic system, the argument is, will preserve the freedoms we cherish and serve as a check on the ambitious and power-drunk state. But just how much free enterprise is requisite for the end and purpose in view? No one suggests a ratio or limit. Would 20 percent free and competitive enterprise do? Would 40 percent be sufficient? Again, little has been said or written about the giant corporations, or near-monopolies, which have not been regulated or controlled in the past, and which often defy the government and force it to deal with them on their terms. There are many such powerful monopolies in the highly industrialized countries, and particularly in the United States. "Little" business is dominated by them and obeys orders from them. The traditional legislation against monopolies has notoriously failed to arrest their growth or seriously affect their policies toward labor, production, quality of product, or patent manipulation.

Finally, as to the public utilities so-called. We are supposed to control and regulate these natural monopolies. Is the control effective and the regulation real and adequate? No independent or progressive governor of any of our states would answer this query in the affirmative. When Franklin D. Roosevelt was governor of New York he found the control nominal and illusory. He urged more and better control, but the legislature paid no heed to him. Many of the lawmakers were, had been, or expected to be, employees of these utilities. The corporation lawyers opposed further legislation in the interest of the consumers, of labor, or of the small investors. Regulation by means of lawsuits is a mockery and a snare. The utilities and the corporations spend millions where the states or the Federal government can spend thousands. Delays, trials, appeals, obstructive tactics, technicalities, consent decrees honored in the breach, all these devices and stratagems, familiar to intelligent newspaper readers, practically nullify the statutes enacted since the late eighties of the last century at the demand of the public for protection against the exactions and abuses of monopoly. The champions of the half-way house, therefore, are champions of half-hearted, futile half-way measures instead of vigorous, radical and well-conceived measures designed to curb monopoly.

Another major depression entailing unemployment for millions of men and women able and anxious to work and produce would cause the collapse of our system. Even the industrialists and financiers know and say that this is morally certain. In that event little will be heard about a permanent half-way economic house, or mixed system. It is wiser to plan now to avert a catastrophic crisis and proceed to build a sound and stable system on a basis of justice, reason, and democracy. Is there any alternative to Democratic Collectivism? If there is, the engineers, the scientific economists, the progressive managers should be challenged to present that alternative. There was, indeed, a period during which an American school of thought, namely that of Henry George, asserted that its middle-way solution happily reconciled freedom and security, individualism and reasonable equality. The one tax on land values, values attributable to social progress, or growth of population and industry, was to cure all our economic ills—abolish unemployment and poverty, restore opportunity, prevent gross and harmful inequalities in income and fortunes, and render socialist regimentation totally unnecessary. Some small groups may still cling to that notion. But the Single Tax movement is dead beyond resurrection. Monopoly, finance-



capitalism, the giant corporations, technological developments have killed it. Land is important, and monopoly in it will have to be done away with, preferably through a tenure based strictly on occupying ownership and proper cultivation. But no form of taxation will solve our financial and economic problems. There is no panacea, no single, simple remedy for our economic, political, and social ills.

Whether or not we are taking to heart, collectively, the lessons of the past 30 years and are resolved to attack our problems—which are also world problems—with boldness, vision, method, sincerity, remains to be seen. If the reactionaries, the shortsighted men of affairs, and the partisan politicians have their way, we shall once more limit ourselves to makeshifts, quarter-measures, treatment of symptoms, and thus invite disaster. There can be no enduring and sound peace under economic chaos and violent civil conflict. International problems cannot be solved if internal economic and political problems of the gravest character remain unsolved. If, then, our civilization is to be saved and revitalized, we must seek peace at home and abroad in Democratic Collectivism or liberal Socialism. The Communists, the Syndicalists, and the Philosophical Anarchists must renounce their respective Utopian goals and resolve to work together for a feasible, attainable, reasonably satisfactory system. Nineteenth century movements have historical significance. We live in the middle of the twentieth century, and our age has its own climate of opinion and its own plans and techniques.



## CURIOUS ARGUMENTS FOR IMMORTALITY

I have been reading, or rereading, certain books and lectures on the question of immortality, survival of the human individual after death. Of course, millions of uneducated and credulous persons still believe in such immortality, but this fact is without significance. Science and philosophy take no account of superstition and ignorance. But when cultivated, trained, able men and women who think, and know what thinking means, assure us that *they* believe in immortality, we are bound—even if we are convinced, unterrified Agnostics—to ask ourselves what explanation there is at this late day for the belief in question. In other words, what is the argument by which real and learned thinkers support their belief in immortality?

In this article, I propose to examine the argument for immortality by several writers of note and standing—Principal L. P. Jacks, the editor of *Hibbert's Magazine*; the late Paul Elmer More, the colleague, in the humanitarian movement, of the late Prof. Irving Babbitt; Prof. W. E. Hocking, Prof. Ralph Barton Perry, and Prof. J. P. Williams. If we find that the arguments advanced by such scholars and progressive thinkers as these are not only inconclusive, but wholly unscientific, woefully inadequate, astonishingly weak and superficial, we shall be justified in deciding that immortality cannot be proved or even made plausible to the satisfaction of any thoughtful, clear-headed and logical person.

This, I may as well say here, is precisely the decision we shall have to reach. Principal Jacks, whose books and lectures are profitable and rewarding, and who is a liberal and progressive educator, tells us that he believes in immortality for the following reasons: Only two doctrines are possible as to the nature of the universe, one holding it to be dead, lifeless, a mechanism going by a kind of clockwork, and the other holding it to be essentially alive, as we are, conscious of itself as a unitary whole. The saying of the Gospel, God is not a God of the dead, but of the living, covers everything in space and time—all is alive, and it is one life, plainly an immortal life, that animates the whole. If we are at one with the universe, we become sharers in its immortality. Life and immortality are the keywords of the real universe and the keywords to our own reality, because we are the sons of the universe. We are the fellow workers of the Great Companion, the Soul of the world. Our purpose, then, is the creation of value. We are here to add value to the world. This we do by treating all men as ends in themselves, and not as means. Now, if we are all extinguished at death, then the universe does not treat us as ends. It is unjust to us, whereas the great Soul of the universe is just. The great and wise men we honor *cannot* be dead. The great Soul, or God, surely looks after them and preserves them, and it will preserve and look after all good and just men. The belief in immortality is thus bound up with the belief in God.

This position is not markedly different from that of Professor Hocking, who makes a distinction between immortality and immortality. In the latter he believes, in the former he scarcely does. Immortality must, according to him, be achieved by a worthy and noble life. The majority of men are *not* immortal; the minority *are*, and deserve to be!

Professor More believes that *all* human beings are immortal, since nature is just and since our mind and heart assure us of immortality. God is incapable of cheating us, of playing tricks with us, or making promises and failing to redeem them. Our belief in immortality is therefore sufficient proof of the existence of immortality.

Now, let us consider the arguments thus briefly summarized with candor and sympathy. In the first place, is it true that men believe in



immortality intuitively? The answer is "No." Many thinkers have no such intuition, no such belief. The arguments for immortality found in books do not convince them. Even those who believe in God do not necessarily believe in immortality. Justice is a human conception and it is sheer presumption to assume that God, if he exists, shares our notion of justice. What his notion may be, we cannot possibly imagine. The finite mind cannot grasp the thoughts of the Infinite.

If many enlightened and earnest men do not believe in immortality, where is the "cheating" and the "injustice" Professor More spoke of in case we reject the idea of immortality? If hosts of educated men are not sure of immortality—and this is undoubtedly the case—again, where is the deception or the trick in question?

Moreover, intuitions are often wrong, and to complain of cheating or trickery seems rather childish. We should teach men to put no blind trust in their intuitions, and to cherish no illusions. We are, of course, allowed by the spirit and method of science to frame hypotheses, but we must never forget that hypotheses are not final explanations of phenomena. And a theory is always subject to revision, correction, or rejection in the light of new evidence. Immortality may be a sort of hypothesis, but it is not an accepted scientific hypothesis, and it certainly has not been proved valid by the proper methods of science. The tendency of most men of science is to reject it on grounds of common sense and human probability.

As for the argument that great, wise and good men deserve immortality, it is incumbent on those who advance it to tell us what their real notion of immortality is. The body, we know, is buried or cremated after death. Physical resurrection of the body we bury, to be attacked by worms and gradually consumed, is simply unthinkable. Immortality for what men have called the soul, or the spirit, is not in itself an absurd idea, provided we know what we mean by the soul or spirit. Does the soul leave the body at or after death, and live on in some other form? If so, where does it dwell? Not on the suns, surely. Where, then? In space, which seems to us empty? Do disembodied spirits float in this space endlessly? If they do, to what purpose? What possible function is theirs? If they do nothing at all, what is the value of immortality to them? What does Principal Jacks mean when he tells us that he is disposed to believe that God looks after the wise and great men and preserves them? To look after, in the human sense of the phrase, is to provide something, to serve, to protect, and to foster. What kind of service do disembodied souls require, and what protection do they need or ask?

It seems foolish to put such questions as these, but the human mind cannot help thinking precisely in these simple terms, and to say that these terms are irrelevant and inapplicable to disembodied souls is to admit, tacitly that the very idea of a disembodied soul is a pseud-idea, in Spencer's words. It is utterly devoid of any meaning. All the talk throughout the ages about the immortality of our souls, or spirits, has been devoid of human meaning. No one can imagine the life of a disembodied soul. If they have neither work nor recreation, in our sense of these terms, what sort of existence do they lead? Surely we cannot imagine Beethoven composing and conducting symphonies before ghostly audiences and employing ghostly instruments. And is Shakespeare writing and producing plays? Is Newton studying Relativity and quantum physics and correcting his own ideas? Is Euclid busy reading the scientific books of the non-Euclidian geometicians?

Again, such questions seem naive, but one cannot help asking them. The philosophers and metaphysicians refrain from asking them, but the philosophy and metaphysics that are not rooted in common sense produce nothing save verbal exercises and idle speculations. What warrant is there for the use of pseud-ideas and meaningless phrases?

Prof. J. Paul Williams, in *The Yale Review*, takes the position that belief in a future life "can be accepted as more probable than improb-



able." Why? Because we all believe that the universe is fundamentally consistent, and that such a universe, which preserves its lowest manifestation—matter—is certainly likely to preserve its highest manifestation—personality. Since personality is the most precious thing we know, the universe would be irrational if it failed to do at least as much for it as it does, according to science, for "a few particles of disordered matter."

Professor Williams admits that for the Atheists, who do not believe in God, a belief in a life after death is clearly irrational. This is, of course, obvious. But he does not even mention the Agnostics, whose number is legion, and who likewise do not believe in immortality for the individual despite the preciousness of human personality. The Agnostic does not deny the existence of God; he simply points out that no human mind can form an idea or image of God. He does not think that a deep mystery is solved or explained by substituting for it a deeper mystery. He is willing, like James, to consider the existence of God as one of several hypotheses, but he cannot find any meaning in this particular hypothesis. To assume the existence of a Supreme Being implies the possession of an intelligible definition of the term "Being." What is the assumed Supreme Being like? No one knows or has the faintest notion. The hypothesis, therefore, cannot be framed or entertained even provisionally. Suppose we say, with Matthew Arnold, that we believe in "a Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness" in human relations. That, too, is only a pure hypothesis and we must require ample evidence to warrant our use of it. But the amount and quality of the requisite evidence on this point need not be considered here. The point is that, if there be such a Power—unknowable, inconceivable, inscrutable, in Herbert Spencer's words—then the belief in a life after death is superfluous and gratuitous.

A word about human personality. It is precious, as stated. On this planet, at any rate, it is the highest product of evolution. What evolution has brought to other habitable planets—of which there are many, no doubt—we do not know and cannot imagine at present. But we must not overlook the grim fact of Evil in human nature. The moral imbeciles; the creatures in human shape devoid of charity, sympathy, good will; the brutal and vicious war lords or cold-blooded and selfish exploiters, have little, if anything, worth preserving. What sane man hopes that these ugly members of humanity will survive death? The notion of Socrates and Plato that the souls of depraved and evil persons after death invade and take possession of predatory beasts was rational enough, if naive and groundless. In our discussion of immortality, let us not forget the millions who are not morally fit to survive and the thousands whose extinction is a positive blessing. Professor Williams apparently expects *all* human beings to live after death, regardless of their intellectual and moral worth. This is hardly a reasonable expectation or hope, and it is not deducible from the premise.

It may be observed, in passing, that Professor Williams' argument is open to objection, already advanced in another connection, that such phenomena as senility, second childhood, the decline of mental power, the loss of some or all of our faculties in old age, or as the result of certain diseases, severally militate against the contention that a consistent and rational universe cannot destroy human personality at death. We witness such destruction and read or hear about it every day, destruction before death, and apart from death. The glaring facts, therefore, dispose of the argument from rationality in the universe.

Finally, Prof. Ralph Barton Perry, in a little book, entitled *The Hope of Immortality*, argues that if death meant total extinction of the individual, it would amount to "a meaningless interruption," like the lowering of a curtain in the midst of the play. Reason, he declares, rebels against such a conclusion. It dictates, rather, the conclusion that the abundance of life here and now points or guarantees life after what we



call death. The present is not sufficient; to make the fullest and best use of it, we require a future. Our hatred of evil and determination to combat and defeat it would not insure our success if our activities were limited to our brief physical span of existence. "Only the extension of life eliminates evil."

Just what does this rhetoric mean? Is evil being fought somehow and in some way unknown to us by disembodied spirits? Or is it the idea that evil persons become decent and honorable by a sort of magic or grace emanating from the pure and noble disembodied spirits? In either case, we are expected to make a violent assumption without a shadow of evidence in support of it. Individual life is limited, and all living things are mortal. But generation succeeds generation; the good work of the dead lives after them; the struggle against evil continues while civilization endures. *Here* is the abundance of life required by Professor Perry. "In the midst of death we are in life." And, as already argued, the finest and highest contributions of men do not die. Bach and Beethoven are not dead. Spinoza is not dead. Dante and Shakespeare are not dead. Evil is fought by books, by art, by science, as well as by living persons. In a sense, therefore, the spirit of man does *not* die. And the spirit is not something that deserts the body at a given moment and finds another habitation and sphere. The spirit lives on in great works, works that speak to us, inspire us, guide us as we face our own tasks and grapple with problems that the ancient or medieval world did not know. Science is progressive and cumulative. The scientist of today stands on the shoulders of his predecessor of yesterday. Technology, the child of science, is also cumulative and progressive. Invention and discovery never take a holiday. Man's curiosity is insatiable.

No; individual immortality in the naive or vulgar sense of the phrase is improbable, even inconceivable. Let us not cry for the moon. Let us live worthily and make the best possible use of our faculties and gifts. The span of life can be and will be lengthened, no doubt. We can count confidently, also, on further successes in the fight on disease, in the effort to render death less painful than it often is, and to make old age more serene, more comfortable. More than that is only wishful thinking, and certainly not rational thinking.



## WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS

To the Editor:

May a life-long student and teacher of the Social Sciences venture to ask for space in the *American Scientist* to offer some comments on Professor Phillips' suggestive and challenging paper "On the Nature of Progress"?

As he points out, progress is going forward—toward a goal—and if we do not know definitely and clearly what our goal as human beings is, we cannot determine whether we are moving, or standing still, or losing ground. The goal of Creation we do not know, but the goal of civilized and semi-civilized societies we certainly *do* know, and we have a fair idea of the distance we have traveled in the direction of our goal in historic times.

To be sure, the social sciences are not "exact," and some thinkers deny that they have the right to the name of science. However, reflection will satisfy any real student of history that several thousand years of effort and experimentation in the fields of economics, government, organization, and education have supplied ample data for tolerably sound and reasonable conclusions with respect to our question—the *reality* and the *nature* of human progress.

What is the goal of civilized men in Europe, America, Asia, Africa, the Antipodes? The answer is scarcely open to doubt: we want a better, a more orderly, a more peaceful, and a more just society. We have the most appealing of all moral formulas in Micah's beloved affirmation that all that is expected of us is to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before God. Whatever cynics and skeptics may pretend to believe, the truth is that we *do* know what justice is, or mercy, or humility. We know what kindness is, and what generosity and benevolence are.

In the words of the able Harvard Committee which recently issued a significant report on needed educational reforms, "Values are rooted in facts, and human ideals are somehow part of nature." Yes, nature is not *all* "red in tooth and claw." T. H. Huxley was wrong when he asserted that morality and humanity *defy* natural law. A civilization such as ours is not founded on violence and fraud. It is rooted in our sentiments. Mutual aid, cooperation, the biologists tell us, are found even in the animal kingdom. Man, who, "if he have no virtue"—in the words of Aristotle—"is the most savage and unholy of the animals," has evolved slowly but steadily in an ethical sense. He has achieved much, though not all, that he hopes to achieve. Compare ancient Greece, Rome, or Britain with modern civilization. There has been very real progress in the treatment of women, of children, of common laborers, even of criminals. We are now seeking to abolish war, and we may succeed this time, having learned something from the failures of the League of Nations. We are hoping and expecting to abolish poverty, to raise living standards the world over, to share *our* cultural gains. We still have grave and difficult problems to solve, but we are working on these problems, and we are aware of the *kind* of solutions that will satisfy not only our reason, but our conscience as well.

All the foregoing seems to me elementary, but Professor Phillips takes no account of the facts and considerations presented here. He gives illustrations of vacillation, uncertainty, and bias among men of science and good will, and, alas, what he says is true. But scientists and philosophers are human and prone to error and prejudice in dealing with politics, economics, and social relations. Long ago, Spencer warned us of bias—religious, partisan, class, national, etc., but he did not advise



a do-nothing policy. He was not pessimistic. He urged deliberate *resistance* to bias and prejudice, and he felt sure of continued progress, social and political. He pointed to altruistic men and women as the highest product of evolution. His ideas, his extreme individualism, are not ours. We do *not* believe in *laissez-faire*, in the police State. We believe in the welfare State, in greater equality, in more democracy, in curbing greed and lust, in protecting the masses against the tyranny of the vested and privileged interests, survivals of feudalism and of uncontrolled capitalism. We know what the trend is in Europe and in the British Empire. We cannot doubt that the trend is wholesome, sound, and progressive. All the inexact social sciences, including history, are back of this hopeful interpretation of the trend. If the professors and teachers of the truly exact sciences are not impressed by the conclusions and judgments of the social sciences, what superior or better judgments do they offer us, and on what authority? On the guesses of the average business man, the standpat politician, the narrow specialists? Hardly. Let them, then, help the specialists in the social sciences to improve their methods and techniques, to avoid hasty generalizations, and wishful thinking.



## PSYCHOANALYSIS DISCOVERS SOCIAL REFORM!

The intelligent lay public appears ignorant of a remarkable about-face on the part of leading psychoanalysts, at least in this country. That original and doctrinaire Freudism is being revised and liberalized is, of course, well known. But the phenomenon not sufficiently recognized is more significant. Psychoanalysis is "getting religion"—it is discovering the vital importance of the deep and far-reaching social reform movement.

It will be recalled by many that in the early days of Freudism the general public, which did not distinguish between the actual teaching of the master and the assertions of most of his loyal adherents, reached the conclusion that psychoanalysis meant essentially this: "Sex is everything." The neurotic and psychopathic patients who consulted the practitioners of the new science and art were, with hardly any exceptions, victims of sexual frustration, disappointment, and marital unhappiness. Impotence in men, frigidity in women, mounting divorce rates, prostitution, and promiscuity were the subjects to which the confident psychoanalysts directed general attention, and the cure for most of the patients treated by them consisted of a more satisfactory "love life."

Psychoanalysis as practiced in Europe and America for several decades seemed to be unaware of the great political, economic, and social movements of the world. That these movements have their heroes, their martyrs, their fervent and zealous workers, mattered little, if anything, to the practitioners. The writer of these lines once had a long and earnest talk with a prominent psychoanalyst, the director of an institute which also served as a school for physicians, nurses, and others who wished to study psychoanalysis in order to better their work in their several fields of activity. He expressed the opinion that the revolutionary leaders and teachers were all bitterly opposed to the present social and economic system because they had failed in it of the recognition and success they had expected as their due. Envy and jealousy—qualities we do not admire—impel them to plot the destruction of the order that does not appreciate their talents. When Peter Kropotkin was mentioned in the course of the discussion, the psychoanalyst remarked that while Prince Kropotkin undoubtedly became famous for his scientific work, it was not that *kind* of fame he had coveted. Possibly he had aspired to political pre-eminence, perhaps even to the imperial crown, since his ancient family looked down on the Romanovs as parvenus.

This nonsense was a characteristic result of blindness to the real causes of social unrest, the wrongs and iniquities in the economic system. Many other examples of this incredible blindness can be cited.

Soviet Russia, officially at any rate, repudiates psychoanalysis, damning it as capitalistic, bourgeois, and anti-Marxian. Where individual Russian physicians practice it, they do so under other names. Some deny that there is anything truly new in psychoanalysis, and the old-fashioned psychology is not banned in the Soviet Union. The Russian opposition to Freudism as originally taught by many fervent, uncritical disciples is understandable, even if the policy of suppression and exclusion is shortsighted, illiberal, and in the end futile.

But Soviet Russia may adopt a different attitude toward psychoanalysis if it learns of the work of the Freudian "revisionists." The early indifference to and ignorance of the economic, political, and social problems of our time among psychoanalysts is giving way to recognition and study of those problems, to appreciation of their gravity and their impact on hosts of men and women in all strata, and, in some notable instances, to enlightened acceptance and support of basic reforms.



Particularly significant is a book entitled *Our Age of Unreason*, by Dr. Franz Alexander, published three years ago in this country and, unfortunately, not adequately reviewed or properly introduced to the *general public*. Dr. Alexander is an eminent psychoanalyst and the director of the Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute. His work is more than a plea for a return to reason and humanism; it is a successful attempt to defend modern ideas of democracy, liberty, and justice in the light of psychology and psychoanalysis. It expresses sentiments and uses language never before encountered in typical psychoanalytic literature. And, above all, it bases its conclusions on clinical and direct experience, on actual cases treated by psychoanalysts and cured or benefited.

Here are some significant quotations from Dr. Alexander's book:

Psychoneuroses are often a highly individual affair, owing to a combination of hereditary factors and unusual, unfavorable experiences during childhood. Their general spread, however, is a sign of social disintegration, a rift between the ideological and social structures. When a great part of the population experiences neurotic disturbances, the cause must be correspondingly general. Mass neurosis is not the cause, but the sign, of a disturbance in social evolution. The phenomena of cultural lag and psychoneuroses are thus intimately connected (p. 138).

Dr. Alexander draws upon Profesosr Ogburn, sociologist of the University of Chicago, for illustrations of the cultural lag, or of the discrepancy in the rate of change between different parts of a culture. And he directs attention to unemployment as a cause of social disturbance and individual neurosis.

A social system, he points out, is rendered stable by certain institutions and by attitudes which become traditional. But during rapid social changes stability becomes a disadvantage, and traditional attitudes tend to extreme conservatism. The rigidity of the conservatives prevents wholesome and evolutionary reforms, and mass discontent is thus generated. Obviously, the psychoanalyst cannot remove or even lessen this discontent by his science and art as applied to individual cases. Institutional changes are imperative, and such changes are brought about by mass movements, political and economic (p. 292).

In a chapter on "Defeatism Concerning Democracy," Dr. Alexander reports that in his own practice he has "observed one emotional factor emerging with impressive regularity in *the majority of his patients* which illuminates the growing pessimism about democracy—insecurity." Americans, he says, still live largely by the tradition of the frontier, but our economic anarchy renders social control and government regulation of industry an unavoidable necessity, and "the psychiatrist must emphasize the facts that economic insecurity undermines people's readiness to accept mature responsibilities and that the population can preserve its enthusiasm for a free democratic system so long as it enjoys at least a minimum of security." This, continues Dr. Alexander, "is not entirely a question of mentality, for the citizen's readiness to accept political responsibility must be matched by a reasonable chance of success, and this depends upon a system in which a mature and responsible attitude effectively provides a secure existence. The preservation of democracy is both a psychological and socio-economic problem" (p. 203).

The psychoanalyst as such is not a propagandist or a reformer, but Dr. Alexander apparently feels that it is part of his function to reassure those Americans who oppose social control and basic economic changes because they fear and dislike totalitarianism in governments, that is, the loss of civil liberties and intellectual freedom, and he therefore has this to say to them:

Government control of production and distribution does not necessarily involve suppression of freedom in politics, thought and expression, but a partial restriction of economic freedom. If



we resist this necessity, we shall suffer the suppression of all other individual liberties. . . .

Regulation and planning do not necessarily mean a rule by decree, but negotiation, persuasion and the reconciliation of private interests and points of view. . . . The ideals of the frontier can be preserved, but must be readjusted to the frontiers which are still open (p. 322).

Considering their source, these ideas and sentiments are truly remarkable. They spell a veritable revolution in psychoanalytic thinking. Dr. Alexander is more explicit and specific than others of his neo-Freudian school, but he does not stand alone. At least, those psychoanalysts who have been exposed to the intellectual and moral climate of Great Britain or the United States and who have watched the struggles for social, political, and economic reform, have gradually realized the narrowness and inadequacy of the Freudian theory and approach. Dr. Karen Horney of New York, a leading psychoanalyst, has written forcefully and persuasively of Freud's mistakes and limitations. According to Dr. Horney, Freud assumed that certain situations and personalities in the nineteenth century typified *universal* human nature, and his generalizations were too hasty and too sweeping. His biological explanations overlooked the economic, social, and historical factors which mold character and shape human conduct.\*

Dr. Frederic Wertham, president of the Association for the Advancement of Psychiatry, has pointed out in the *New Republic*, apropos of a recent novel regarded by many as "Freudian," that the current literary and screen conventions about psychiatry and psychoanalysis are in truth outmoded and obsolete. Psychiatry, he observes, "is over-glamorized and over-publicized at a time when actually it is at low ebb with respect both to scientific progress and human application." What Dr. Wertham means is that the world social crisis has posed baffling problems to the psychiatrists and psychoanalysts which they are not prepared to grapple with and which have shaken their beliefs and undermined their neat theories.

Dr. Alexander understands this phenomenon thoroughly and blazes the way to effective and mutually advantageous cooperation by the psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychoanalysts, on one hand, and the progressive economists and sociologists, on the other. The neo-Freudians have no quarrel with social radicalism. They recognize that they have much to learn from Marx, Proudhon, the British Fabians, and the American radical left. This is good and important news to the social workers of the civilized world, whose "cases" require light from more than one direction. They surely are well aware of the fact that the hard, complicated cases they have to deal with reflect the world crisis and cannot be treated after the general pattern of the orthodox psychoanalysts. They have long since concluded that "sex is *not* everything," and that unemployment, destitution, dependence, disillusionment, exploitation, ignorance, and bad government severally and in various combinations produce mass neuroses! They will welcome the discovery of social reform and social work by psychoanalysis.

---

\* (It is well to acknowledge here the growing trend in this direction since the Horney and Alexander works. This trend has been mounting steadily. Dr. Maxwell Gitelson's article in the March, 1945, *Social Service Review* could well be noted. Also the fact that out of the psychiatric experience in the recent war the most notable observation has been the one by Dr. Roy Grinker and Dr. John Spiegel to the effect that under sufficient stress any individual may show failure of adaptation evidenced in symptoms of profound mental and emotional disorders. See also Charlotte Towle's article in the June, 1946, *Public Welfare Journal* on "Public Welfare and Democracy.")



## WAR: CAUSES AND CURES

Generalizations about human nature are of dubious validity. When Freud asserted that man is naturally aggressive and predatory, and that therefore war is, under circumstances, unavoidable, many of us—humanists, pacifists, progressives, meliorists—shook our heads. Man, we remembered, was also a social and political animal. Man cooperates in a hundred ways and mutual aid is as characteristic of him as combativeness and selfishness.

Man is rational, and he is also irrational. He believes in reason, and is proud of his science and his philosophy. But at times he obeys certain drives and urges which reason would condemn if it had a chance to restrain him:

Libraries are full of books about war, its causes, preventives and possible "moral equivalents." Perhaps there is little to be added to what has been thought and said on that tragic problem. But the present world situation tempts one to restudy the subject. Leaving deduction on one side, let us ask, in the light of comparatively recent experience, the old familiar question: Why do nations fight? Why have we failed to extend to the field of international relations the reign of law, which, despite limitations and exceptions, we have found indispensable *within* organized states and countries? It has been said that one nation can start a world war, while many nations must will and labor to insure peace. Any nation can start a war because of the accepted doctrine of national sovereignty. That doctrine, in the words of Professor Dewey, is a doctrine of anarchy.

Take first the United States. Here is a favored country, a "have" country, with an abundance of natural and human resources, with vast spaces and an energetic, industrious population, and with what we call free institutions. Has this fortunate nation enjoyed peace; has it managed to deal with its problems rationally; has it, in a word, succeeded in escaping the miseries, horrors, and appalling wastes of war? *It has not!* Why not? What were the causes of *its* several wars?

The war of the Revolution—as even England now admits—was inevitable because of the arrongance, obstinacy, and stupidity of the British rulers and statesmen of the time. The American colonists had serious grievances, and a policy of conciliation and reasonable concessions would have delayed independence for a long time. Even the eloquence of Burke made no impression on the blind Tories. Resort to force was natural in the circumstances. Canada would rebel and fight the mother country today, if England had not learned its lesson and granted its principal colonies home rule and virtual equality in a Commonwealth of British Nations.

What caused the Civil War? Again, blindness, arrogance, fanaticism, and unwillingness to give and take under the compulsion of changing conditions. That war was unnecessary. Slavery would have been abolished by consent, and compensation would have been paid to the planters of the South, had reason and the spirit of mutualism prevailed.

What caused the war with Spain over Cuba? *That* war was wholly unnecessary. Yellow and unscrupulous journalism, mendacious atrocity stories of all sorts, unsupported charges about *The Maine* explosion, and McKinley's political opportunism and insincerity combined to cause that war.

Our entrance into the World War was undoubtedly caused by our financial stake in the victory of the Allies, our indignation against Germany and its ruthless submarine warfare, and our sympathies with



England and France, whom we did not want to see beaten and bled white by a German junker-directed peace. British propaganda, skillfully conducted here, was but a minor factor.

It should be added that nearly all our sober historians believe that our war with Mexico was unwarranted and unjust. We wanted Mexican territory and trumped up vague charges against that country. We were in an imperialistic phase of development and were aggressive and arrogant. "Manifest destiny" was a rhetorical slogan. Demagogues used it effectively.

So much, briefly, for America's wars. It is much more difficult to trace with any scientific exactitude the causes of old-world wars, past or present. Yet judicious historians agree that *many* of these wars might have been averted and the issues involved in them settled by negotiation and mutual concessions.

It is out of the question to discuss here many of the old-world wars. Space forbids any such attempt. But a sufficient number of such wars can be taken up and dealt with impartially, and the generalization or conclusion that will emerge will apply to many other wars, if not to all.

First, the World War. Was it unavoidable? That is not the opinion of scholars and objective thinkers. If the Austro-Hungarian government had accepted the Serbian answer to its harsh ultimatum, there would have been no war. It must be remembered that the German Kaiser himself wrote in a marginal note that the Serbian answer was quite satisfactory and that he was greatly relieved and reassured by it! Why was it rejected, and why was the Vienna government so precipitate and so intransigent? It wanted to humiliate and destroy Serbia, and it preferred war to peace at that critical juncture. It gambled and blundered; its responsible statesmen were reckless and stubborn.

Again, why did Germany give the Vienna government *carte blanche* at the time, instead of trying to restrain it, to warn it, to advise patience, prudence, and moderation? Germany "did not want the war," it said. No, perhaps not. But *it did not want peace badly enough to lift a finger to prevent war.* It was bound to have its way, war or no war, and war came.

Some Russian statesmen, too, preferred war to peace on certain terms. The Russian foreign minister, Isvolsky, spoke of "*my war*"—he had welcomed it, apparently, and had done nothing to promote a diplomatic settlement. Perhaps some French diplomats then in power were not averse to war; a war of *revanche*, a war to recover Alsace and Lorraine. The *people* did not want war; but they had no power and but little opportunity to shape the course of events.

The cause of the World War, then, were: the vanity, pride, ambition, folly, and blindness of statesmen clothed with brief authority! Particularly, of Austrian and German statesmen, who had contempt for the people.

The British-Boer war? Were not the noblest and best Englishmen—Morley, Bryce and many others—pro-Boer? Did they not oppose the Tory policy in South Africa, a policy of grab and domination by British adventurers and imperialists? The defeat of the Boers, fortunately, was not followed by the destruction of Boer autonomy. The Union of South Africa is today as free as Canada.

The Franco-Prussian war of 1870 resulted directly from Bismark's "iron" diplomacy and statesmanship. It was aggressive and Machiavelian. The so-called Ems telegram, a characteristically tricky move in the game, was intended to provoke France and to start a war in the interest of German imperialism. German unity was to follow, and it did. In the same way, the war between Prussia and Austria of 1866 was planned and engineered by Bismarck for the purpose of weakening and humiliating Austria and making Germany the first power in Central Europe.

Is it necessary to comment at any length on the Sino-Japanese war, the Italian invasion and conquest of Ethiopia, the annexation of Man-



chukuo by Japan, the invasion of Albania by Italy, the annexation of Austria, and the recent expansion of Nazi Germany?

None of these wars was *necessary* or morally defensible. They were wars of naked aggression and conquest. So far, they have not even paid "dividends." They may *never* be economically profitable to the predatory aggressors.

What shall be our conclusion, then, as to the fundamental and major causes of war? We cannot fail to recognize that these causes lie in the nature of kings, diplomats, dictators, statesmen, who are not essentially different from other men—*average* men of all classes and conditions. Only, most men wield no power. Those who possess power are certain to abuse it; power corrupts and demoralizes. In the words of Lord Acton, "absolute power demoralizes absolutely."

As long as individuals, or small cliques, have the power to make war, wars will be made. Ambition, vanity, false pride, envy, thirst for glory, the desire to aggrandize one's state at the expense of other states, the passion to tyrannize over others—these emotions will lead to war, and pretexts can always be found for the most criminal and inexcusable wars. In international relations, mendacity, falsehood, hypocrisy, and double-dealing have been the rule for centuries, or millennia, and the end is not yet.

To be sure, there have been schools of opinion, and there still are schools, which maintain that wars are "biologically" necessary and inevitable; that in war the fittest survive, and the unfit are eliminated or subdued and dominated for the good of the human race. Wars are declared to be "eugenic"; that is, the vigor of the race requires them, and peace would spell degeneration and decay. This gospel has been preached by militarists and by scientists alike. Man, we are told, owes his progress to fighting other men; "civilization travels on the powder cart," said Lowell.

It is, however, a fact that in recent years more and more of our scientific biologists—to say nothing of moralists and sociologists—have repudiated that gospel, and have argued that war is "anti-eugenic"—that it has ceased to be a test of real fitness. Mechanized warfare, poison gas, wholesale bombing from the air, massacring of women, children, the aged and sick have little relation to fitness. Besides, today money, not physical fitness, may bring victory. Countries that happen to have gold, or oil, or iron, rubber and copper, may be able to defeat countries that lack certain materials, or gold, or foreign exchange, despite their superiority in racial vigor, intelligence, and patriotism. It is safe to say that the biologists who oppose war have the better of the argument.

There is more to be said for the school—a growing one—which holds that wars are caused chiefly by *economic* factors—by the urgent material needs of some nations whom we now call "have-not" nations. Germany, Italy, and other nations now demand "room to live"; they want more territory, more fields of grain, more oil wells, more precious metals. They feel that the "have" nations owe their strength and wealth not to virtue, but to past aggression and conquest, and that they simply wish to keep what they have, regardless of any consideration of justice and fair play. Why should not the poor nations pursue the same policies which the rich and sated nations pursued in the past with success? They ask: Why a new deal today? Why a sudden conversion to morality in international relations?

The answer to this line of argument is not unfamiliar to thinking persons. The crimes and follies of the past do not justify new crimes and follies. A new deal, a new policy, in international relations would benefit *all* nations, because under modern conditions there are no victors in war. All participants lose; all should desire permanent peace, and all should make their appropriate contributions to the cause of peace. No nation will surrender territory or population, but all should strive to increase and extend foreign trade, and all should have access to raw



materials and natural wealth on fair terms. Colonial policy can be modified and international cooperation substituted for exploitation by any one power. "Mandates" over colonies should be genuine mandates; the interests of the native population should be deemed paramount. Investment for development of untapped resources should be open to all nations desirous of sharing in such opportunities.

Professor John Dewey has been quoted above to the effect that among the major causes of war is the idea of national sovereignty—an idea, which is equivalent to that of *international anarchy*. Individuals, groups, minorities, and classes have been gradually but surely brought under the control of law and ethics. We do not permit members of any society to make war on their fellow members. We have not abolished crime, but we punish it and thus, perhaps, prevent it to a considerable extent. We subordinate—in theory at any rate—all special interests to the welfare of the whole society. Why should *nations* be permitted to flout all moral principles and all considerations of humanity and attack other nations, with or without reason, merely because they expect to gain something by war? War *can* be outlawed, and *should* be. If pacts and leagues fail to accomplish this purpose, the explanation of the failures is to be sought not in the purpose, the idea, but in the ways, methods, and machinery thus far tried. Other means are available: experiments will suggest other and better experiments. The federal system has brought the United States peace and progress. Why should not Europe look forward to federation and all its economic and social advantages? Such federation would assure Europe peace and prosperity, and thus many of the causes of war in Europe would have been removed.

Finally, psychologists affirm that among the causes of war are: the human dislike of drudgery, of disagreeable labor, of monotony and boredom, and the love of adventure, excitement, variety, and novelty. To many, war means relief from drabness and intolerable conditions of work and existence. But work should not be sheer and mere drudgery; and existence should always have sufficient variety and interest to render it more attractive and more desirable than escape into barbarism and moral irresponsibility.

To sum up: The causes of war are rooted in our imperfectly socialized nature. The criminal and semi-criminal elements wage war on society, and peace, order, and harmony within the most civilized societies are as yet only ideas. In international relations, the very idea of law and order is rather new. But it is a sound and realizable idea, provided we patiently ascertain and remove the major causes of war. We have almost got rid of religious wars, or of crusades. Tolerance is growing in that province. Economic causes of war remain; commercial conflicts and tariff walls are forms of warfare, and many lead to physical clashes. Free trade and federalism are undoubtedly prerequisites of peace, but when will mankind be ready to accept these principles and institutions? No one knows the answer. Progress toward those goals will be very slow, but we must work for that progress patiently and faithfully.

Again, democracy is less likely to rush into war than autocracy or dictatorship. Discussion at any rate prevents hasty and rash action. The people have been taught to demand information and discussion, though they do not always effectively enforce their demand and display too much patience. The right to knowledge and to the presentation of all sides of public issues of moment clearly needs additional guaranties and safeguards. The institutions and agencies designed to insure deliberation, to afford opportunity for conciliation and mediation, need implementation and increased authority. Even a declaration of war should not preclude criticism of the government and expressions of dissent. It is never too late to give sobriety and reason a chance to propose alternatives to brute force and savage violence.



## HUMANIZING POLITICAL ECONOMY

By the "humanization" of economics I understand the frank acceptance by it of certain ethical and social postulates and principles, the acknowledgment of a desirable goal or realizable ideal, and the drawing of definite and constructive conclusions.

A humanist economics is one which deliberately undertakes to promote human welfare, eliminate abuses in the economic realm, and point the way to harmony, genuine efficiency and sound progress. Such a science of economics would not be "dismal." On the contrary, it would be hopeful, confident and "mellioristic."

Too many of the younger teachers or students of this science are totally or almost totally ignorant of past attempts—despite their real importance and not inconsiderable influence—to redeem, purge and humanize economic science. Some highly competent economist would do well to treat the matter historically; to orientate students working in this field.

How many have read Ruskin's "Fors Clavigera," or "Letters to the Workingmen of England"—letters in which much attention is devoted to the fallacies of the so-called classical economics? How many remember Ruskin's ridicule and refutation of the Productivity theory of interest on capital, as set forth by Frederic Bastiat, the eminent French *laissez-faire* champion and the assailant of the protective tariff policy? How many college students are now advised to read and discuss in the class-room Ruskin's "Unto This Last" and other essays on economics and ethics? Ruskin's brilliant contributions to a sound humanist economics deserve revival and enlightened appreciation.

And let us not forget Carlyle—in a sense Ruskin's master. True, Carlyle was more rhetorical than analytical. But his striking phrases and palpable hits did not a little to undermine the assumptions of the *laissez-faire* school, and to pave the way for John A. Hobson's humanist economics. Toynbee of *Toynbee Hall* owed Carlyle and Ruskin a debt of gratitude, and he nobly repaid it in his own essays and in his conduct and practice.

Prof. John K. Ingram's remarkably able and broad-minded "History of Political Economy," first published some 50 years ago as an article in the British Encyclopedia, is of course a "must" source-book for the contemporary revisionist and re-constructor of economic science.

The same revisionist should be reminded of Henry George's notable contributions to progressive economics—particularly his elaborate examination and reasoned argument against Malthus' theory of population vs. the food supply. The job need not be done over again. It is a pity that the younger writers on population and neo-Malthusianism overlook George's chapters on Malthus in "Progress and Poverty." The Single-Tax movement is dead, but George's discussion of rent, land, wages and like subjects is still profitable and helpful.

It is probable that formidable things have stood in the way of contemporary efforts to rewrite and humanize economic text-books or books for the general lay readers of economic literature. One is the influence of Marxian Socialism and the Marxian over-emphasis on the forms and modes of production as the determinants of the political and social order. The influence of Marx and his cardinal doctrines is stronger and deeper than many imagine. Prof. Paul Schrecker, a distinguished German philosopher and hisotrian, reported recently in *Harper's* magazine the results of his investigation of our universities, and expressed surprise at this phenomenon. There is much conscious and unconscious Marxism



in the thinking of our educators, including the philosophers and historians. There is general acceptance of the doctrines of economic determinism and dialectical materialism. Even the "class struggle" key to history, according to Prof. Schrecker, is tacitly and rather uncritically swallowed by many American educators and historians, inadequate and crude as it undoubtedly is.

If we decide to reconstruct our economics, we must shed Marxian dogmatism and confidently reintroduce ethical postulates and principles into the science. The new humanist economics will be more scientific, not less. Without rational ethics, economic writing is almost wholly descriptive, and description without interpretation is not science. Science, said Huxley, is prevision, guidance. To violate basic ethical principles in economic relations is to create antagonisms and plant the seeds of civil discord and social strife.

Finally, the humanist economist will have to correct wrong and unjust appraisals by many *laissez-faire* economists, of Adam Smith, Ricardo, Mill and other classical economists. Even Malthus has been misrepresented somewhat. The leading classical economists did not deny or belittle the role of sympathy or mutual aid. They isolated "the economic man" for certain definite purposes, as physicists and chemists do in their respective fields. But to show that the economic man—whose motto is, Business is Business—acts in a certain way toward his employes, or toward trade unionism, is not to imply that he acts rightly and intelligently, even from the viewpoint of self-interest properly understood. The economist has no quarrel with ethics as the philosophical humanists teach it.

To sum up, there is a grateful and rewarding task awaiting the younger and more progressive students of economics who hope to mold the rising generation. This is to remove the obstacles of superstition, error and parochial or class preconceptions from the path of social reorganization and make possible the resumption of sound progress, national and international. Perhaps this task might be performed by a cooperating group of educators, instead of by a single author. History in late years has illustrated the possibility and utility of team work; why not try team work in economics? Some outstanding and recognized contemporary authority—Prof. Harry Hansen of Harvard, let us say, or Prof. Wesley Mitchell of Columbia, or Lord John Maynard Keynes of England—might be willing to direct and edit the volume or volumes in question.



## HUMANISM AND ITS MANSIONS

It is quite clear now that the House of Humanism will have several mansions. The strictly naturalistic or scientific humanists have no use for or need of supernaturalism in any form or any degree. They are too enlightened to be dogmatic Atheists, and certainly the burden of proof is not on them. Those who cannot dispense with the God hypothesis have failed, and will always fail, to tell us in plain terms what their conception, notion or idea of God is. Neither are they able to say what image they have formed of God. They know that biblical language about God is metaphorical—not literal. God is not an old, tall, bearded man who sits at a table in a place called Heaven, using our earth as his footstool. He does not take walks in a garden in the cool of the evening. He does not speak to any prophet in any known tongue.

The enlightened Theist of today is forced to think of God as Matthew Arnold thought of him: as an inscrutable, inconceivable, unknowable power—not ourselves—that makes for righteousness in the long run. Prof. Edward Scribner Ames, of the University of Chicago, appears to take the position that there can be no more doubt of the existence of God than there is of the existence of Uncle Sam, or John Bull. In other words, God is merely a name of a spirit, a genius, a combination of qualities we admire and cherish. As it happens, Dr. Ames' colleagues in the department of philosophy at the University of Chicago—the late George H. Mead and the late Addison Moore—were unable to find any merit or utility in this definition of God. They preferred to drop the term, as Huxley, Tyndall, Spencer and many other agnostics did. The simple, undeniable truth is that the God hypothesis is utterly useless as a guide to action.

When evil is in the ascendant; when tyranny, reaction and barbarism defy our civilization and enthrone brute force, as Hitler did, what have the most enlightened Theists to say? Merely this—that the ways of the Unknowable Power are "mysterious," and that we must have faith in the ultimate victory of the forces of good and light. The Agnostics have this faith, though without the benefit of the Unknowable. They have this faith, and are firmly committed to it, because the history of the human race supplies ample and reasonable warrant for it. Despite all the crimes and blunders perpetrated by false and vicious leaders, moral progress is a fact—not a theory. Civilizations have perished, but other civilizations, superior from the viewpoint of our ideals, have evolved and established themselves. All our criteria testify to the reality of substantial and genuine progress. The treatment of women, of delinquents, of children, of the insane, even of animals, points definitely to the growth of sympathy and mercy, as well as of justice and fraternity. Tragic as the recent war was, the attitude toward it was strikingly different from that which prevailed during the first world war. Only the degenerate barbarians in the Nazi-Fascist schools glorify and exalt violence and force. Millions of plain men and women now realize, for the first time, that international warfare is insane, immoral, and totally wanton and wasteful. The demand for permanent and effective agencies to insure and enforce peace will have to be heeded this time, and hence the war, terrible as it was, will yield beneficial results of high value.

Scientific and philosophical humanism, in short, does not despair of human nature, though it does not commit Comte's mistake of substituting humanity for God as an object of worship. Humanism is a noble and worthy cause, requiring no supernatural or divine sanction.

We know what men can do, and what they cannot do. We must not,



in the words of John Morley, ask too much of average human nature. We are neither angels nor devils. We are not mere animals, because we have what Aristotle called both intellectual and moral virtues. The intellectual virtues enable us to form goals and ideals; the moral virtues enable us to move gradually—though, alas, not steadily—in the right direction.

We have faith in the potentialities of men and their ability to correct serious abuses and transform the realities of everyday life into something finer, richer and higher. This faith is a reasoned one. It is not the product of wishful thinking. No intuition generates it. Reflection, study, observation and experience combine to persuade thoughtful men that a just, humane and noble society is possible, feasible and desirable. The doom of the Hitlers, Tojos and Mussolinis, and the inevitable contempt and scorn being visited on their reactionary and insane doctrines, should prove a tower of strength to the teachings of the social sciences as they have evolved and matured in the past century.

The new psychology, including psychoanalysis, emphasizes the paramount importance of good will as a factor in improving and perfecting human institutions and relationships. The Age of Reason neglected character-building. Too much was expected of mere knowledge. Today we know that *to know* is not *to do*, and that the men who lack good will, sympathy and charity are the most savage of brutes. Humanism, accordingly, must stress the education of the emotions, the cultivation of the moral virtues, the shaping and molding of character.

There is a technique for the achievement of these great tasks. Youth can be educated upward as well as downward. It can be gently and effectively led to fall in love with beauty, goodness, honesty and truth: these are the pillars of the Good Society. Revealed religion, alias superstition, is not necessary in building or safeguarding and maintaining genuine civilization.

However, since there are humanists who arrive at their sound conclusions with the aid of religion and revelation, it would be foolish and short-sighted to ignore them or treat them as tenants at sufferance in the mansions of the House of Humanism. We can work with them and they with us in a hundred practical ways regardless of theoretical and dialectical differences.



## SENSE — NONSENSE — SEMANTICS

CHASE, STUART. *The Tyranny of Words*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1938, pp. 396.

OGDEN, C. K., and RICHARDS, I. A. *The Meaning of Meaning*. Fifth Edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1938, pp. 363.

We have been reading and hearing lately about the science of language to be, Semantics. We certainly need such a science, but it will not be promoted by shallow, fallacious and paradoxical assertions concerning "the tyranny of words." Recent contributions to Semantics contain much that is platitudinous, not a little that is irrelevant and unimportant, and much that is, in effect, reactionary and dishonest.

Aristotle and Locke pointed out long ago that many of our philosophical, metaphysical and social controversies are fruitless because we do not make sure, at the outset, that we use terms, phrases and formulae in the same sense. We often say undisputed things in a solemn way, and as often we attack vehemently propositions that no one advances. Thus we fight over words instead of over ideas, concepts, interpretations of facts.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that we need, in all our discussions, careful definitions and the utmost possible precision in our propositions and affirmations.

But some would-be exponents of Semantics in America, unfortunately, do not limit themselves to objections to unnecessary vagueness in expression, to failure to frame clear issues, to loose thinking and empty, pointless writing. They go beyond this—they indict the whole human tendency to employ general abstract terms, and to quarrel about "abstract ideas." I say they "indict the whole human tendency" in this direction, but they never really return such indictments, because they offer sundry disclaimers and qualifications that nullify the charges supposed to be contained therein. The sweeping statements ventured by the popularizers of Semantics like Mr. Chase are self-contradictory when rigorously analyzed, and too indefinite to yield the slightest utility.

There are several hard, grim facts which the glib writers who expect social salvation and spiritual liberation from the progress of Semantics appear to overlook. The first is that life is a very serious, complex and rough sort of affair, and that men and women have passions and appetites, drives and urges, which largely determine their behavior. To assert that we fight over words, and even meaningless words, is to forget such ugly realities as hunger, tyranny, love of power, greed, jealousy, hate and fear. Crime, vice, trickery, oppression, sadism, delight in cruelty are unhappily encountered daily and hourly in all societies, and particularly in the recently rebarbarized and enslaved societies. What about the struggles inevitably produced by these phenomena?

Another ignored fact of the utmost importance, theoretically and practically, is this—that men do not always *wish* to understand other men. Long ago Spencer listed the several kinds of bias which preclude mutual comprehension or agreement—theological, party, class, patriotic bias, and others. Truth is often violently resisted—the truth, for example, among our economic royalists and arrogant oligarchs about the C. I. O., the Labor Relations Act, or the elements of wilful fraud and trickery in our economic system. Further, as an old adage might remind us, words may be used to *conceal*, not to reveal, thought. That is to say, mendacity, sophistry and hypocrisy are not subject to the writs of any science, linguistic or other. The venal special pleaders we have



always with us, and they are not, as a rule, ignorant of the meaning of meanings, or of the ideas certain terms are intended to convey.

Revolutions, ancient and modern, have not been fought over mere words. The circumstance that revolutions *produce* slogans, winged phrases, symbols, is irrelevant. Justice, equality, liberty are "abstractions," but so are Woman, Childhood, Love, Dignity, Decency.

The claim that Semantics is the cure for our social and economic abuses is amazingly naive. Let us take a few—space forbids more—striking illustrations. Mr. Chase actually affirms that, if the people were armed with Semantic knowledge, "corporations would not be interpreted as tender persons"—that is, the constitutional provision protective of property and due process would not have been applied to artificial entities! This is a childish misconception. Lawyers and judges who are conditioned or bound to protect property rights against the encroachment of labor or "radicalism" could not be prevented by any amount of *knowledge* from contending that, since we recognize the existence of artificial or legal persons, namely corporations, any provision in organic or other law in which the *word* persons is used may and does cover such persons, as well as "tender" live beings called human. The context, or the intent of the framers of the provision, will decide the point. And if the point remains open to doubt, class *interests* and class *ideas* will determine the position taken.

Economics, Mr. Chase complains, is a jungle of abstract terms, but hastens to add that some of them are useful short-cuts. What science is *not* a jungle of abstractions? We must not "objectify" abstractions, though. Well, who does? Mr. Chase gives us a list of what he calls meaningless questions in economics—meaningless because they have no "discoverable referents," or because they involve identification of words with things. Let us see: One of his meaningless questions is, "Are we headed for inflation?" and another, "What is a classless society?"

Neither of these questions is meaningless. Neither identifies words with things, and neither lacks referents. One may argue about the facts and figures cited by this or that economist or man of business to prove that inflation is probable—inflation in currency, or in security prices, or in commodity prices, or in all of these, but controversy in any science, or near-science, does not indicate that the question debated is meaningless. Questions may be difficult, and disagreement concerning them inevitable, but not a single question in the works of the reputable economists, from Smith down to Hobson or Pigou, is *meaningless*. We may doubt the possibility of a classless society—the present reviewer decidedly does entertain such doubts—but any student of Marx, Lenin and other Socialist thinkers knows perfectly well what *they* mean by a classless society. *None* of the Socialist authorities mistake words for things or dispense with needed referents. Mr. Chase's illustrations betray shallow thinking throughout. He imagines he is objecting to *words* when he is objecting to certain ideas and theories that are perfectly clear and entertainingly by educated and well-informed men.

Unemployment, Mr. Chase reminds us, is not a *thing*. What of it? It is a *fact*. What danger is there in using the *word* unemployment in discussing the *fact* of unemployment, the problem generated by that fact, and the solutions proposed for that problem? Some assert that technological unemployment tends normally to correct itself, and that is doubtless true, *on the whole*, but no one has ever asserted that unemployment is not a major economic and social problem, practically speaking, at times. In any case, no one has ever mistaken the *word* employment for the fact. We have the word because we have the fact!

We certainly need clear and honest thinking, but no reforms in language, no science of language, will do away with malice, selfishness, indifference to others, vanity, pettiness.

Mr. Chase appears not to realize that statements may be vague, or general, or abstract, without being "meaningless." Thus he says that if



a man tells you he doesn't like Harvard, he makes a meaningless statement. Not at all. The statement has plenty of meaning. Reactionaries may not like Harvard because it has liberal professors. Fundamentalists may not like Harvard because it has had Agnostic professors and Babbitts have their reasons for disliking Harvard. A statement may require a bill of particulars for certain purposes, but it may be full of meaning, none the less. Some benighted business leaders complain that "the United States Supreme Court has been packed against business." This is a very *significant* statement though not all will understand it. To the reactionary anti-New Deal business group, Justices Reed, Black, Frankfurter and Douglas are subversive radicals, foes of business!

Semantics, it is clear, would not free people from wishful thinking, rationalization, the familiar proclivity to jump at conclusions, the confident expression by ignoramuses of opinions that lack all foundation in knowledge.

Astonishingly enough, no support for Mr. Chase's falacies and paradoxes will be found in the most thoughtful and richly suggestive work on the subject of Semantics—*The Meaning of Meaning*, by Messrs. Ogden and Richards. In fact, that book makes mince pie of nearly all of Mr. Chase's complaints against our economists, lawyers and statesmen. It emphasizes and re-emphasizes the proposition that language has no fewer than five functions, and that it is absurd to demand of poetic, or religious, use of language the same qualities that we expect of scientific use of language. Words have been and always will be used to evoke certain attitudes in readers or auditors. Words will be used as expressions and stimulants of attitudes. Emotional matters require the employment of evocative or emotional terms. "Man is a worm" is not a scientific statement, but it is a perfectly legitimate statement from a certain theological or poetic point of view. "Man is a social animal" is a scientific proposition, and there is in it certainly some element of reference, though not the kind of referent Mr. Chase, in his confusion, appears to think necessary for meaning. As Messrs. Ogden and Richards observe, "some elements of reference probably enter, for all civilized adults at least, into almost all use of words, and it is always possible to import a reference, if only a reference to things in general." Many propositions, they go on to show, have no limited or directed references, but they are not on that account meaningless, or reprehensible, or objectionable. We must bear in mind the several functions of language and judge the writer or speaker by the proper canons applicable to the function he seeks to utilize. He may try to teach, or to inspire, or to excite anger and indignation, or to create a certain mood conducive to speculation, reminiscence and reflection.

To imply that language has no business to serve other than strictly symbolic or scientific functions is to lay no foundation for a science of language, but to betray abysmal ignorance of the nature of language—or of science.



## WHY DEMOCRACY OFTEN FAILS

The older, 19th century Liberals believed and said that the remedy for the ills of liberty was more liberty, and for the shortcomings of democracy, more democracy. That was more than a cliché, or tag. The truth is that most of the so-called "weaknesses" of democracy as a system turn out on analysis to be weaknesses of human nature unaccustomed to, and untrained and undisciplined for, the proper working of democratic institutions.

Democracy is said to be inefficient. When action is imperative, the totalitarian governments seem to have certain important advantages over those executives that have to reckon with bicameral parliaments, with majorities and minorities, with party leaders and strategists. Talk, delays, obstruction, deliberate filibusters, vanity and pride of ambitious individuals in high positions hamper and cripple capable executives, and may cause defeat in war or in a domestic crisis.

In extolling Italian Fascism, Bernard Shaw more than once asked querulously, "Do we want things done?" He implied that the British system suffered from too many checks and balances, and involved dawdling and waste of time, energy and opportunity.

What are the facts? No organization or institution can function without intelligent and reasonable rules of procedure. Such rules should provide for fair and adequate discussion, for limitation of debate in emergencies, for action on pending measures, for majority rule in all cases where the written or unwritten organic law contemplates majority action.

Where the rules of procedure permit and encourage obstruction, filibusters, wilful waste of time, there is something wrong with the leadership. The right rules are not adopted because they are not desired. Some dominant groups or interests are *opposed* to democracy. Why, then, blame democracy for the consequences?

Our own Congress is notoriously poorly organized. Committees "bury" bills referred to them for consideration. Committee chairmen are given far too much power, and they often abuse it. There is no legislative program, and no method in dealing with legislation. Hence, jams, confusion, blind voting, log-rolling, and all the evils and vices we complain of under democracy. But sincere believers in democratic processes know that these evils and vices are *not* inherent in democracy. As already said, they are attributable to a lack of willingness to apply democratic principles consistently and to abide loyally by the results of a full and honest application of those principles.

Another source of inefficiency and waste by democracies is to be found in our failure to educate our youth and our adult population for living and working under free and representative or popular institutions. Our civic and political education is—with few gratifying exceptions—dull, lifeless, formal, and superficial. It cannot and does not arouse or maintain interest in government. It does not create any desire to *fight* corruption and maladministration. It does not send forth active workers for good government. It glosses over, or ignores, the most flagrant abuses of power and office. Professors, instructors, and teachers are not encouraged to treat government realistically and dramatically. They are timid and perfunctory. Certainly the courses on government and politics *can* be made vital and absorbing.

Furthermore, our school and college curricula overlook the necessity and the possibility of courses designed to promote intellectual integrity, honesty, and fairness in political discussion. There is, alas, very little honesty in political oratory, political platforms, and political de-



bates in legislative assemblies. As already pointed out, the outs never give credit to the ins, and the ins are slow to recognize merit and truth in the criticisms of the outs. Political campaigns are supposed to have educational value; as a matter of fact, they confuse issues, poison minds, stimulate hate and fear, and cause many self-respecting persons to shun party politics and elections. A campaign is too often a malodorous mud-bath. Rant and cant please crowds, but alienate the judicious.

Intellectual integrity cannot be taught in text-books or lectures, but it can be generated and nourished and rendered attractive by various indirect and subtle means—by example, by contrasts drawn from history, by analysis of current propaganda, and calm refutation of falsehood. Debates in classrooms can be organized and guided with tact and scientific method. Students can be shown how *not* to debate a given controversial issue, as well as how to debate it without sophistry or trickery.

Washington's Farewell Address contains many pertinent and candid observations on the ugly and seamy side of partisanship and factionalism. Washington hoped the American people might avoid partisanship in their politics. Experience has proved the impossibility of such avoidance. Parties are inevitable in a free democracy, but the party system does not preclude intellectual honesty and fairness in political discussion. Our educational system has not seriously attempted to moralize politics and to emphasize the duty and privilege of clean, sincere, honest thinking.

The revolt against democracy is, in part at least, a revolt against practices and methods that violate the spirit and essence of democracy. Why not give genuine democracy a chance? Finally, the divorce between democratic government and the spoils system, the loaves and fishes of public office, must be much more complete than it is. Men's ideas will always be largely dictated by their economic interests, but this does not mean that the fight of parties for power should also be a fight for fat jobs, contracts, pecuniary benefits. The victory of a party at the polls should involve nothing but a transfer of policy-making offices—ministries, premierships, and the like. A comprehensive merit system should cover all the positions and jobs in the fields of administration. The voters should put in the men who will give the orders and determine the policies; and, of course, these orders and policies should sincerely reflect and embody the mandate of the electorate, insofar as this is possible and feasible. But the hosts of employes who carry out orders should not be disturbed; they should enjoy permanent tenure as long as they remain efficient and faithful. In Great Britain this system is yielding good results, although it is by no means complete.

The spoils system as we know it is disgraceful and viciously undemocratic. It accounts for much of the waste and incompetence most of us profess to deplore. In democracies public office should be a public trust, and high standards of service should be the rule, not the exception. There is nothing Utopian about this goal, and it is essential to the success of democracy in government.

No, democracy has not failed. Totalitarianism is infinitely worse than democracy, but that reflection does not justify indifference to the abuses and excrescences that undermine and weaken the democratic forms of government.



## THE MAKING OF MANY BOOKS

To the making of many books there is no end, says the Bible. Of course, too many books are written and published—books which offer nothing new and lack even the merit of freshness or charm of style. Ruskin was guilty of considerable exaggeration when he said that whenever he read an advertisement of a new book he bought or read an old one. There is no doubt, however, that with hosts of men and women reading is not a pleasure, but a form of dissipation. They read to kill time, to escape *ennui*. They retain little of what they devour so hastily and inattentively. They skip without having acquired the necessary art of skipping. And they do not stop to reflect, to re-read and discuss striking or profound passages.

Intelligent reading is very rare. Few seem to have discovered the simple truth that one can save much time, energy, and money by neglecting all third-class and second-class books and going for information or knowledge to the first-rate work which the others merely echo and copy. One good book on the Single Tax, for example, or on Marxian Socialism, or on Fabian Socialism, or on Protection vs. Free Trade, or on Evolution, or on Relativity, is enough, provided you know which of the many available books is really original, adequate, and in a scientific sense up to date.

Books have been divided into two classes—books of power and books of beauty or delight. The foregoing observations apply to the first-class, not to the second. There is no "best" book in poetry, fiction, the drama, literary criticism, the essay. Because you have read Balzac and Dickens, you cannot reasonably dispense with Proust, Henry James, Thomas Mann, Virginia Wolfe. Sophocles and Aeschylus are very modern, in a sense, but we should lose much if we failed to read the plays of Ibsen, Shaw, and Chekhov.

Our debt to books is beyond computation. In a thousand ways, direct or indirect, books educate us, civilize us, give us understanding, deepen and extend our sympathies, enlarge our horizons. One does not argue or debate with books; one does not try to score points; one is not ashamed to give credit to a book or to acknowledge an error revealed to you by a book. Books slowly and subtly modify our opinions; "joint debates" are more apt to generate sophistry and dishonesty.

It is not, however, my intention to develop the foregoing truisms or to pay tribute to books. I propose in this paper to record impressions and gains which remain with me as the result of wide and catholic book reading despite the lapse and ravages of time. We forget much, inevitably, even if we are dowered with excellent memories, but certain lessons and messages we retain, and they help us in hours of need, or enrich and ennoble our lives.

Do not expect any system or method in the random recollections and comments that are to follow. I apply the needle to the disk in our brain, and the association of ideas, accidental timeliness, or what not, bring certain themes and ideas to the light of day. Only some of these can be set down here.

Years ago I read a volume of essays by William Inge, former Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, in which that staunch conservative, that vigorous opponent of paternalism and severe critic of labor unions, declared that only individuals are capable of rising above their personal or economic interests, while classes never have and never can free themselves from the power of selfish interest. How many upheavals and revolutions that candid statement explains! The real author of revolution is the unbending and stubborn Tory, the Bourbon who learns nothing



and forgets nothing! We have nothing to fear from the Thomases and the Browders, and much from the bigoted, purblind industrial tyrants and financial jugglers.

A question which has troubled hundreds of generations and still remains a subject of controversy has been settled for me by two men—Spinoza and Cardinal Newman. That question is: To what extent does intellectual education, or mere knowledge, promote goodness and moral progress? If we know what is right, do we do the right thing? Disagreeing with Aristotle, Spinoza in his *Ethics* affirms that ideas are weak, pale, and impotent in the presence of passions and strong desires. An idea is a generalization, an abstract proposition, a conclusion arrived at in the light of history or common experience: We accept it only if nothing within us resists and rejects it. Only passion can overcome passion; one strong desire or urge may offset or defeat another. The prevalence of certain venereal diseases in modern society is due less to ignorance than to lack of self-control.

Cardinal Newman, in his lecture on "The Idea of a University," clinched the matter for me. He wrote:

Knowledge is one thing; virtue is another. Philosophy, however enlightened, however profound, gives no command over passions. . . . Quarry the granite rock with razors or moor the vessel with a thread of silk; then you may hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against those giants, the passion and pride of man.

In another essay Newman says that "the phenomena which are the basis of morals and religion" are "faint shadows and tracings, certain indeed, but delicate, fragile and almost evanescent, which the mind recognizes at one time, not at another, discerns when it is calm, loses when it is in agitation. The phenomena may be obscured in the human mind by passion, or moral fault, or other causes."

It is interesting to note here that the so-called Austrian or Bohm Bawerk theory of Interest—the theory which has superseded that of the Classical economists—rests on the preference we all have for *present* pleasures over possible *future* satisfactions. To defer any satisfaction, according to that theory, is to make a sacrifice, and sacrifices have to be paid for, even if no more is involved than the postponement of a generous gift to a university, or hospital, or opera house, by a multimillionaire. A mental picture, an idea, a mere promise to one's self or to others will not be exchanged for an imperative decree of the senses.

Recently some religious journals carried on a discussion of the question: Can science save us? They should have consulted Spinoza and Newman, and conserved their space for *open* questions. Science alone cannot save us. It can tell us, perhaps, how to solve certain menacing problems, but the will to solve those problems at all, or to solve them in the way suggested by science, is an indispensable prerequisite. That will, alas, is lacking.

How is good will to be created and developed? What can be done to make people fall in love, as it were, with justice and righteousness, to cause them to revolt against oppression, exploitation, piracy in modern forms, and demand a sound, stable, and human economic order? William James spoke of tough minds and tender minds. Are we born either *hard*-hearted, callous, insensitive, indifferent to suffering of fellow-beings, or else kindly, benevolent, generous, *soft*-hearted? If we are not born either egoists or altruists, what do we know of the ways and means available to socialize our emotion, build character, strengthen our sympathies?

Neither psychologists, sociologists, nor ethicists are in agreement in respect to these fundamental questions. We ourselves are disposed to assert at certain times, or under certain influences, that there is an abundance of good will in the world, but a woeful deficiency in intelligence. The proverb has it that hell is paved with good intentions. But



at other times we insist that our intelligence is equal to *any* enterprise, and that we simply do not *care* to apply that keen and developed intelligence to social and economic problems. Does not the abolition of poverty and misery seem a trivial task beside the marvels achieved in the realms of technology, physics, chemistry, and astronomy? We think of aviation, radio, canned music, wireless, surgery, the conquest of diseases once dreaded and deemed fatal, and we sadly say to ourselves that surely the problems of unemployment, business cycles, urban congestion, and destitution *cannot* be beyond the capacity of the human mind.

Again, books come to our aid and dispel such perplexities. Herbert Spencer in his *Education* and *The Principles of Ethics*, and John Dewey in his *Human Nature and Conduct* and elsewhere, have thrown welcome light on the foregoing questions. Heredity is much, but not everything, they tell us. We are born with all manner of potentialities for good and evil. Environment selects certain of our qualities and fosters them. The conduct of parents and relatives, the habits formed in childhood, the practice of the neighborhood and community, the example of admired teachers, the dramatization of past lives and the glorification of noble and heroic deeds—all these influences mold and shape our personalities. Environment acts only upon given hereditary material, to be sure, but that material is plastic and mutable. Attend to the habits of the young, says Dewey. Educate the emotions, as well as the intellect, says Spencer. Create a climate, an atmosphere, an environment with a definite social purpose, and the individual's innate tendencies will respond to and prosper in the environment. It is impossible for an individual to be moral in an immoral world, says Spencer, which is another way of saying that behavior is determined largely by the environment.

Education! What nonsense has been and still is being written on that subject! There is the quarrel between the so-called progressive schools and the old, conservative schools, the interminable controversies over the desirability of making education easy and pleasant, the need of discipline and self-discipline, the freedom of the student to select the branches of knowledge he will pursue in school or college. Extreme positions on these questions lead to absurdity, and can be burlesqued with devastating effects. No writer has dealt with education in a saner, soberer, more convincing way than H. G. Wells. It is not the college, he points out, which imposes these or those studies upon its charges. Nature and society make the selection and dictate the curriculum. No one today can ever *finish* his education. It is a lifelong process. The best educated persons are ignorant of many things. But common sense suggests that some knowledge is more essential than other to the average body of men and women. We must learn something about our planet, its history, and its place in the universe; something about the history of the human race; something about our economic, social, and political institutions; something about religion and philosophy; something about the human mind and the human body; something about letters and the fine arts. To be sure, the textbooks, the lectures, and the assigned supplementary reading on all these subjects should be made as interesting, absorbing, and exciting as possible, but the acquisition of knowledge is not *all* fun. Physical and mental application is requisite. Work is not an evil to be avoided. The most terrible thing in the world, as Anatole France says, is *ennui*, not work. Rest and recreation cannot be enjoyed unless work has preceded them. The normal man is not an idler; he longs to *use* his faculties creatively. He wants to master problems and to overcome difficulties. No one in modern times has rendered greater service to reasonable pacifism and Humanism than William James in his famous essay, "The Moral Equivalent of War." Man is a restless, ambitious, combative animal. He is not afraid of risks and danger. He is not deterred from fighting by reports or fiction depicting the horrors of war. Frightfulness in warfare does not force surrender; it merely begets reprisals of like or greater savagery.



Men fight because they are full of hate for some country or class. They fight because they are weary of drudgery and monotony, and crave adventure and excitement. They fight because they are ignorant and an easy prey to mendacious and vicious propaganda. They fight because they are envious and jealous, vain and proud, and bound to try to prove their superiority. Now, all these incentives cannot be exorcised by sermons or prayers. They will operate until equally powerful substitute incentives are gradually built up and called into action. We can do away with war only by giving men other than human foes to fight—nature, disease, superstition, and the like.

We waste time, energy, and money on futile and shallow arguments for or against war, and ignore two or three brief essays which finally and thoroughly solve the problem and prescribe a clear course of action. Verily, to the making of *superfluous* books there is no end.

On the deepest problem of all, the existence of what billions of men have called God, the last word to date, and perhaps for all time, has been said by Darwin and by Spencer. This will seem a preposterous statement to the orthodox of all denominations, but the trouble with the orthodox is that they do not realize that they do not really believe what they believe they believe. They mistake what Spencer calls *pseudo* ideas for ideas. They use high sounding words without meaning.

What, if they stopped to reflect and to analyze their terms, would they give us as their definition of God? Many of them even talk of a personal God, though all they know of personality is derived, of course, from their contacts and experiences with men, women, children and animals. The painter necessarily portrays God as a man, and generally as a man past middle age, with a beard. If he is intelligent, he knows that his imagination is utterly unequal to forming an image of God. When we talk about God's face, back, hand, footstool, and the like, we employ figures of speech, as we must but only the ignorant and foolish believe that God *looks* like a man, has the shape of a man, and lives like a man. Well, what, does God, if He exists, look like? We do not know and cannot know. Here is what Darwin wrote in a letter on the subject:

I may say that the impossibility of conceiving that this grand and wondrous universe, with our conscious selves, arose through chance seems to me the chief argument for the existence of God. I am aware that, if we admit a First Cause, the mind still craves to know whence it came about and how. The safest conclusion seems to me that the whole subject is beyond the scope of man's intellect.

The safest conclusion, Darwin says. It is, in fact, the only possible conclusion that has any meaning. All other conclusions are *pseudo* conclusions. They solve one mystery by falling back on another and greater mystery. They refuse to think beyond the point which, they allege, yields them great moral and spiritual comfort. But those who continue to inquire, criticize, think, and use words intelligently know that the orthodox solution is no solution at all. It gets rid of the grosser, primitive, and puerile conceptions of God by forming a sort of hypothesis which is too shadowy and empty to admit of examination. Neither science nor common sense can do anything with such hypotheses.

Spencer adds little to Darwin's humble conclusion. But he is more elaborate in his treatment of the subject, more philosophical and more emphatic. He does not use the term God, preferring the phrase, "the power from which all things proceed." That power, he argues is inscrutable, inconceivable, unknowable. Well, is it not? Man, finite man, a part of Nature, would indeed be presumptuous and childish were he to hope ever to form a clear conception of that power. If this be true—and no one since Spencer wrote his *First Principles* has even seriously attempted to refute the argument—it follows that it is idle for man to seek to answer the questions whence the power came, how it was itself caused, and what laws, if any, govern its operations.

We must resign ourselves to ignorance of the nature and quality of



the power in question. To think of it as "personal" is naively antropomorphic. We can study its manifestations in ourselves and in the rest of nature. We cannot pray to an unknowable and inconceivable power, but, if the facts warrant it, we may infer that the power, on the whole, makes for what we humans call goodness, virtue, and progress. Nothing we do can be *anti*-natural, and nothing else in the universe can be contrary to the laws of nature. We human beings have evolved certain notions of morality, and we are certain that these notions, if applied, lessen friction and conflict in society and improve human life in all of its aspects. We have evolved conceptions of duty, right, and beauty which we are anxious to share with others. We have visions and ideals, and an inner urge to realize these ideals. All these things, we hold, are in harmony with the design which we dimly perceive in the human corner of the cosmos. In doing our duty as civilized beings we feel we are cooperating with the power in, behind, and over nature. All this is proper and legitimate. But more we cannot assert.

There are those who say that this view tends to gloomy pessimism. To pessimism, yet, but not to gloomy pessimism. Human life, according to Schopenhauer, is essentially tragic. But it does not follow that we cannot and do not keenly enjoy life. Philosophically, there is no escape from pessimism. Temperamentally, few of us can long maintain a pessimistic attitude. Schopenhauer may affirm that nature tricks us, administers powerful narcotics to us in the form of music, poetry, polished, gracious intercourse, and what not, in order to prevent us from sinking into melancholy, and tempting self-destruction. The fact remains that we find pleasure and delight in the fine arts, in gracious social relations, in the contemplation of natural beauty, in travel, and in other things, and this means that we enjoy life, and do not wish to lose it. We do not, that is, *act* like pessimists.

The same answer may be made to the contention that disbelief in individual immortality, or survival after death, must reduce us to despair and contempt for life. Paul E. More, in his *Scientific Approach to Religion*, meaning orthodox Christianity, passionately protests against the notion that we can be, or ought to be, content with race immortality. If, he says, the individual is not immortal, then a cruel and bitter jest has been perpetrated on humanity. For, he contends, we *long* for survival after death, cling to the belief in such survival, and realize that our gifts and peculiar qualities, the qualities that make us men and women, are never put to full use in our short span of earthly existence; and extinction, therefore, would be a terrible waste of precious resources.

Mr. More's argument is singularly weak and unimpressive. It is not true that all men are born with an instinctive faith in personal immortality. It is not even true that all men desire immortality. The belief in immortality is a product of education by theologians and philosophers who have convinced themselves that certain writings, called inspired or divine, have revealed to humanity the fact of immortality. There is no evidence that the belief would arise spontaneously and naturally in one not reared and instructed by adherents of pre-scientific theologies and cosmologies. There is said to be considerable evidence to the contrary.

Not all men long for personal immortality. Yet it must be confessed—and Professor T. H. Huxley did confess—that a sort of horror flashes across our minds on occasions when we stop to think of death as the end of our conscious existence. This, however, is perfectly natural, but it is equally natural that our intelligence should make peace with the inevitable and conclude that the course of practical wisdom is to make our brief span of life as significant, abundant, and useful as possible. The cultivated and thoughtful man does not resent his fate. He meets it with courage and stoicism. He knows that human energies and faculties decline with age; that even great intellects have lapsed into dotage or second childhood; that in the vast majority of cases death does *not* deprive humanity of any important additions to the stock of culture or



knowledge. It is gratuitous to suppose that had Bach and Beethoven lived several decades longer than they did, the western world would be richer by another dozen symphonies or another score of beautiful suites, fugues, chorales, and preludes. Mr. More's argument seems to imply that Bach and Beethoven, Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare continue to produce master works somewhere in some form, thus duly fulfilling themselves and conferring further benefits on—on whom, pray? Not on human beings as we know them, surely. On disembodied spirits, or angels?

The believers in individual immortality, or survival after death, do not know just what they believe in. They cannot frame any intelligible formula for their alleged belief. No wonder Professor Ernest Hocking of Harvard felt constrained in his recent little book on the subject to reject immortality for a new and startling concept—that of immortality. Only the elite, the aristocracy of humanity, he thinks, is worthy of survival or capable and desirous of it. The average man or woman has nothing to contribute, and had better die for good. The few who have intellectual or moral genius deserve to be, and are, preserved. It hardly needs saying that Professor Hocking knows no more than the Agnostics do *where* those exceptional persons are preserved, in what form, and for what purpose. His compromise suggestion is not acceptable to the orthodox, since it sacrifices the immortal human soul, and is too unsubstantial to challenge or interest the Agnostics. Huxley would ask: Why imagine vain things? Why not say modestly and honestly, "we do not know and cannot know"? Personal survival after death are words wholly devoid of meaning to us. It is another pseudo idea.

The old controversy between the upholders of determinism and the champions of human free will was, for me, rendered empty and absurd by the discovery in Spencer's *Principles of Psychology* of the simple fact that there is no such entity as "will." The term is convenient, and we use it as we do shorthand and symbols. But all that we can possibly mean when we speak of a strong will, a weak will, a good will, or bad will is that some person so acts normally as to indicate that he or she seldom hesitates, suffers from no internal conflicts, and is dominated by some strong or overmastering passion; or that another person vacillates and drifts and evades a decision. The ruling passion is the so-called will. It may be a passion for power, a passion for money, or a passion for righteousness. To say that the passion is free is nonsense. Our actions are dictated by instincts, impulses, desires. We think we are free to act simply because we cannot be sure, in advance, *which* of our desires will prevail and which will be resisted. Mass behavior is predictable; individual conduct is so only in certain clear cases. There is no freedom of choice in any case.

But, it is objected, if man is a machine and his actions are determined by cause open to study and analysis, what becomes of morality, of progress, of education? Professor J. W. Herrick has ably answered that question. It is precisely because man is a machine that education can influence him, that his morals can be steadily improved and his progress deliberately planned and furthered. Because man is a machine, we know what to expect from discipline, from cultivated habits, from environment, from indoctrination.

The universe is governed by law, and we are a part of the universe. The notion of causelessness, of so-called indeterminacy, is preposterous. We may not understand all the operations of nature, especially of minute particles in nature, but that is due to our poor instruments. We may or may not, in the future, improve our instruments and facilities for the study of atoms and the constituents of atoms. Meantime our imperfect knowledge does not warrant the assertion that there is "freedom" or caprice somewhere in nature, physical or super-physical.

Take another great controversial question—the existence or non-existence of a "law" of progress. Is human progress certain and inevitable; that is, are we so constituted that we are bound to advance to-



ward a cherished and desirable goal? Professors Bury and John Dewey have treated this subject with scientific care and accuracy. We no longer cling to the naive belief of the 18th century that social and moral progress is steady and uninterrupted. Alas, we know better now. Long periods of stagnation and even actual retrogression and dehumanization are possible. Whole societies have been rebarbarized, and lawless, vulgar gangster governments have been permitted to flout all the principles of civilized decency. Quackery has been substituted for science, and educators have been muzzled and regimented. No, progress is not inevitable. There is no assurance that another dark age is not ahead of us.

But we also know that those of us who favor and want progress in social, economic, and political fields can and will work and fight for it, and that the period of stagnation or retrogression will be succeeded by one of resumed progress. No tyrant or savage can destroy civilization, he can only interrupt it. He cannot burn all the humane and enlightened books, nor kill the sentiments and ideas which characterize human culture and civilization. Rebellious groups can be terrorized for a while, and reduced to silence and submission; they cannot be permanently suppressed and disarmed; they certainly cannot be converted to falsehood and folly. The Hitlers and Mussolinis are offensive and obscene nuisances, but they are short-lived nuisances. Like murder, intellectual and moral fraud will "out." The masses eventually tire of noise, humbug, bombastic oratory, bragging and bluffing, and turn to sober, honest, and reasonable leaders. Cruelty, sadism, and insane hate at last burn themselves out, and the ideals of humanity and justice remerge and claim allegiance and devotion. We have some ground for hoping that both our business cycles and our moral cycles will be replaced by stability and healthy, if slow, advance. If this hope be vain, then Spengler was right, and civilizations, like human beings, have their youth, middle age, decline, and death.

In the foregoing paragraphs, I have shown just how books of the first order or category, books really worth reading and re-reading have solved, for many, the most serious, profound and complex problems of civilized human societies. Some of the solutions, I assert, are final; others are subject to revision in the light of additional data. Let me now turn to problems which no school or thinker claims to have solved, but which are being studied today more scientifically and more realistically than ever before, and which are creating literatures no educated person can afford to ignore. What, for example, is evolution, or revolution, doing to the family, to marriage, to the relation between parents and children? What effect has Russian Bolshevism had on sex morals and manners? Has Russia destroyed the family life? Has she preserved monogamy? Has she done away with prostitution and conferred upon the woman a new status, one of dignity, independence, equality? Are Russia's laws of marriage and divorce likely to appeal to more civilized societies? Bertrand Russell favors trial marriages, and so did George Meredith. Is that idea as shocking today as it was 30 years ago?

How has psychoanalysis and its emphasis on the unconscious affected our thinking? Is Marxism consonant with Freudian and Jungian interpretations of social and individual ills? The more enlightened Freudians have discarded certain early notions concerning sex and its place in life, and are rediscovering what they call the total personality. They recognize that individual problems are often social problems, for which the environment is largely responsible. These are no longer anti-reform. Even Russia would not dismiss them as counter-revolutionary. But what is their contribution to thought? We know that nothing in life is static, and that our conceptions of morality and propriety are bound to undergo modification in sympathy with the trends and developments in science, economics, politics, and social customs. The long view corrects the unavoidable mistakes of the short view. Travel in space kills



provincialism; travel in time kills fanatical devotion to transitory and ephemeral dogmas. Institutions are made for man, not man for institutions. If man is worth saving and perpetuating, we may trust him to establish fit and worthy institutions.

We often hear it said that the individual no longer counts, and that there is no good reason why he should take a serious interest in, and devote time and energy to public affairs. Let the individual pursue his own happiness, we are told, and renounce all missionary activities. These are fallacious ideas. Happiness cannot be pursued directly, nor in a social vacuum. We are members of one another, and we need one another. We cannot be happy unless we give expression to our powers and capabilities. Happiness is a by-product of such expression. We can and do count individually, if we cooperate with our fellows and act collectively. Organization and cooperation do not preclude leadership. And leaders carry weight and exert influence on events only if they are backed by intelligent and active followers. A victory for your party, group, or organization is a victory for you.

Since I am not writing a book, but only a paper, I feel that I must stop. But I must say a word or two about books versus direct, vital, personal experiences. We can learn things in two ways only—by assimilating and accepting what others have said, generally in books, or by personal observations, contacts, and experimentation. Most of us enjoy very limited opportunities for observation and experimentation; we depend largely, therefore, on books—that is, the recorded observations and conclusions of others. When books contradict our own personal conclusions, we reject them emotionally and stick to our personal conclusions. This is inevitable, in view of what William James called “the tyranny of the concrete fact.” One observed or experienced fact makes a deeper and more lasting impression on us than do a hundred books. I recall an amusing incident illustrative of this truth. I once delivered a long lecture, before a woman’s club, on trade unions, their necessity, legitimacy, and social utility. I argued; I cited facts, and gave figures. One very intelligent woman had a rather unpleasant experience with a member of a plumbers’ union, who, very likely *was* unreasonable, rude, and arrogant. I did not blame her; she was obeying a psychological law. Yet my argument was sound, and there *is a scientific case* for trade unions and collective bargaining.

We must read books critically and we must, in addition, seek *direct* knowledge of life and human nature. The narrow life, the isolated life, produces intolerance, ignorance, prejudice, and callousness; the rich, dynamic life engenders understanding and sympathy. But life is short and individual experience necessarily limited. Books take us into the past and into the future. Books insure continuity of culture. They conserve and preserve what is best in civilization while enabling us to discard the worst—that is, the outworn, the discredited, the false. Not to know how to use and enjoy books is to court ignorance.



## OUR AGE OF UNREASON—AND AFTER

A distinguished psychoanalyst has written a thought-provoking book on "our age of unreason." He deals in this work with the Nazi-Fascist revolt against all that is humane and reasonable in our civilization. He discusses the theories of Pareto, Spengler, Nietzsche, and other advocates of brute might and contempt for the common man. He himself has no sympathy with these reactionary pseudo-philosophers, but he is impressed and oppressed by their influence.

Certainly, the central ideas of the Nazi-Fascist theorists are no monopoly of Hitler's Germany or Mussolini's Italy. In this country and in free Europe many middle-class and upper-class men and women share those obscurantist notions. There are still, or perhaps again, bitter critics of democracy who long for "elite" domination and for the liquidation of the principles of the Hebrew-Christian ethics, of the Renaissance, and of the Enlightenment era in France. There are Fascist groups and organs of liberal opinion everywhere and all of them favor slavery for the masses and total tyranny in government.

Now, the student of history is aware of the fact that at various times leaders and eminent thinkers have over-emphasized the role of reason and underrated that of human passions, emotions, and will. Too much has been expected of the intellect, of logic, or general ideas. Knowledge is *not* virtue. Conduct, "three-fourths of life," is not governed solely, or even mainly, by accepted or professed beliefs. To recognize the right is not necessarily to practice it. We often sin against the light, fall lamentably short of our supposed standards. Pride, appetite, fear, vanity, envy, lust for power easily triumph over moral sentiments or the dictates of our consciences. The categorical imperative, alas, is not always obeyed.

If our age, then, had merely discovered or rediscovered the instincts, the intuitions, and the passions in their relation to human conduct, and had thus forced a reappraisal of the true role of the intellect, it would have rendered an inestimable service to the social sciences and to practical morality. But the age of unreason is guilty of asserting that not only is the intellect weak and often impotent, but that our instincts and passions are base, low, brutal, and our civilization a thin veneer, if not a hollow pretense. If this theory were valid and well-founded, we should despair of civilization and renounce all our aspirations and hopes of a better and lovelier world. If we are savages, and must remain savages, then our intellect, as Aristotle said, makes us the most unholy and vicious of animals. Our science merely increases our destructive power. We can demolish in a year, thanks to our weapons, what it has taken decades or centuries to build up, thanks to the same science. If we are naturally cruel and sadistic, our fate is sealed. Sooner or later we shall re-barbarize our society.

However, this theory is fallacious and shallow. Even Freud, who is accused by many ignorant persons of having laid bare the essential depravity of human nature, said that, if the revelations concerning the unconscious show that we are worse than we think we are, they also show that we are better than we think we are. The evil in us is deep and strong, but so also is the good. We cannot afford to be too complacent about ourselves; we must confront our evil side and fight it unceasingly. But the fact that we *can* fight the kingdom of evil within us, and do at times, is significant evidence on the credit side of our ledger.

Such civilization as we have achieved is certainly not based on malice, hatred and enmity. All that is noble and valuable in it reflects and expresses the better side of human nature. Even the animals, as we know, have the same good qualities—mutualism, cooperation, in short,



altruism. Nature below the human level is *not* all "tooth and claw." Human society, despite all its defects and failures, bears witness to the softer, gentler, finer qualities of our race. And there can be no question as to the certainty of further moral and social progress. The same motives which have operated to bring us to the present juncture will prompt us to resume our efforts and our advance after the slaughter and the devastation shall have stopped. The idea of progress current in the last century has had to be modified, to be sure. Progress is not steady, uninterrupted, guaranteed. But tragic interruptions and lapses *are* followed by steps upward and forward.

We say, indeed, that a few more global wars like the present one may ruin and bury our civilization. Such rhetoric is natural and inevitable. Still, even after several more world wars millions of men and women would remain on this earth, as would millions of books, pictures, monuments, laboratories, scientific instruments, musical masterpieces, and the inspiring beauties of nature. The degenerate Nazis and Fascists cannot burn and wipe out these cultural and spiritual possessions. Hence they cannot *actually* destroy civilization. The reaction against their false and absurd doctrines cannot be delayed much longer even in the areas they have controlled and dominated for a decade or more.

That reaction will be felt in all the realms of the spirit—in science, in philosophy, in religion, in letters, in the arts, and in politics and economics.

This does not mean that we can afford to compromise, palter with crime and savagery, give our mad enemies any quarter. No, we must fight them and utterly rout them. But we must not forget that after the war millions of Germans, Italians, and Japanese will repudiate the reckless tyrants who plunged their respective countries into this unnecessary and wasteful conflict, and will offer, in all sincerity, to work with their liberators in all constructive and beneficial enterprise. Our age of unreason will be succeeded by an age of restoration and healing under the guidance of reason as well as sympathy and good will.

The lessons of our terrible experiences will be turned to good use and should help us purge our sciences and pseudo-sciences of the errors and distortions found in the noxious teachings of the Spenglers, Paretos, and Nietzsches.

Meantime, it is clear that one of the lessons can be taken to heart here and now, without awaiting the order to cease firing. The lesson has to do with our educational system and our ideas of pedagogy and school organization. Our education has been one-sided, narrow, scrappy, superficial. We have unduly neglected the emotions. We have paid little attention to character-building. We have assumed that good will takes care of itself. The new psychology has scarcely affected education. Knowledge has not been synthesized. It has been a thing of shreds and patches. We graduate young men and young women ignorant of ethics, of history, of philosophy, of political science. Without vision, that is, without a philosophy of life or guiding principles of conduct, societies decay. And, of course, philosophy is in one aspect love of wisdom, and men without character cannot love wisdom.

Now, it is not easy to cultivate the emotions and build sound and elevated character. More preaching will not do it. As some eminent thinker has said, admonish school children to be good, and they will not only think you a bore, but will be tempted to run out and commit some crime. Character-building is an *art*. It has to be done indirectly, subtly, adroitly. It is done best by example and by the creation of a certain environment—serious, lofty, inspiring. Men and women must be gently introduced to ideals, and conditioned to fall in love with them. Virtue and kindness must be made attractive. Duty, despite Kant, must be translated into pleasure and privilege.

If the school and the college tolerate race discrimination, snobbery,



indolence, waste of time on trivialities, then the atmosphere is certainly *not* conducive to the formation of the right character. If the teachers and professors do not know how to win respect, affection, and emulation, then one of the prerequisites of character-building is lacking.

Familiarity with the great masterpieces in letters, music, and painting; amateur acting in classical and modern plays, and cultivation of the theater habit under judicious and discriminating direction; group discussion of philosophy and metaphysics—these resources may be named among the major factors in the successful formation of character. To point this out is to remind ourselves once more of the woeful and unpardonable shortcomings and omissions in our present educational system.

A balanced educational system is not likely to produce unbalanced fanatics, worshippers of force, willing slaves of a tyrant and paranoiac. It will produce practical idealists, humanitarians thoroughly committed to the scientific method of arriving at conclusions. Such trained and disciplined men and women will not revolt against reason, any more than they will disparage good will. The half-baked and arbitrary fallacies of the Spenglers and Paretos will not make much headway among them. It is for us of the generation now in charge to liquidate the age of unreason and of cruel misrepresentation of human nature and its potentialities.



## GOOD WILL AND INTELLECTUAL POWER

The horrors we are witnessing these days cannot fail to cause much anxious searching of hearts and minds. The old question, "What ails the so-called civilized races of men?" must spontaneously put itself to all thinking persons again and again. Are we too stupid, too short-sighted, to adjust ourselves to our circumstances and solve our economic and social problems, the problems which have made for wholesale murder and incredible cruelty and fiendishness? Renan said that he derived his notion of infinity from the "infinitude of human folly"; but is not that observation contradicted daily and hourly by the striking evidence of human ingenuity and human capacity afforded by radio, aviation, television, the techniques of production and transportation?

Certainly our inventors, engineers, accountants, statisticians, and industrialists are not stupid. The lawyers who frame our laws, and who teach our corporations and utilities to circumvent those laws, are not lacking in astuteness and resourcefulness. Our advertisers are clever enough, and our architects astonish us by their boldness and originality. No, the root of our troubles and disorders cannot be ignorance and stupidity.

Are we deficient in imagination? Again the answer is "No." Our scientists and our artists, our explorers and research workers, possess plenty of imagination.

What, then, do we so woefully lack?

Prof. Frederick Woodbridge, in his last book, *Essay on Nature*, sadly declares that "we need more intellectual honesty these days." Why "these days"? When *did* mankind possess enough intellectual honesty? In the the day of the Inquisition? When men were burned at the stake for theological heresies? Intellectual honesty has always been very rare—the Darwins and Wallaces are few and far between. However, an age like ours, an age of moral confusion and the worship of success, is unquestionably in need of much more intellectual honesty—and intellectual humilitiy—than we can claim to possess. And, clearly, intelligence and scientific knowledge do *not* guarantee any increase in intellectual integrity.

Did not Aristotle go deeper into the question than Professor Woodbridge when he said that "man, if he have no virtue, is the most savage and unholy of animals"? The kind of war now being waged in the Old World superabundantly exemplifies the savagery of men who have no virtue. The shocking brutalities of the concentration camps and the merciless persecutions of racial and religious minorities attest the total absence of virtue and humanity in the tyrannical rulers responsible for them.

But what is virtue? Not *knowledge* certainly. The brutes in power are unmoral, or amoral, but they know what they are doing, and are not ashamed or contrite.

Virtue is another name for good will, for sympathy and kindness, for the sentiment of brotherhood, of oneness with other human beings. Millions of terrorized Germans and Italians have their share of good will, but the ruling cliques must be moral monsters, apes in human forms. *Their* behavior is inexplicable on any other hypothesis. Men of good will would reverse the present policies of the brutalitarian States—there can hardly be any doubt of that. Men of good will *shall* reverse them in time.

Meanwhile the nations that still remain decently civilized and decently humane must ponder the bitter lessons of the rebarbarization and degradation of so many governments and ruling cliques. If virtue *can* be



so completely lost, or left out of certain natures, what can we do, what must we do, to build and nourish it, to prevent its decline and submergence, and, further, to render it impossible for wicked, sadistic, and predatory men to seize power and secure absolute control of the destinies of nations?

That Nazism and Fascism are symptoms of grave social disorders is generally recognized. That statesmen in countries still free and reasonably healthy committed reckless blunders and crimes, which prepared the soil for the aggressors and super-gangsters, is indisputable. But these considerations need not be elaborated here. The vital point that concerns us is this: How is good will cultivated, encouraged, fostered, and spread? What can *education* do toward that end? Our schools and colleges have almost totally neglected that function. Lectures on physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, history, and like sciences do little for character building. Commercialized and vulgarized sport does even less. Even the so-called social sciences, and the humanities, can be, and indeed have been, so poorly taught in our educational institutions that their potential civilizing and humanizing effect has been reduced to the vanishing point. Courses in classical economics, for example, have averted very few strikes or lockouts. The stubborn and anti-union employers believe themselves to be consistent followers of Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Bastiat. Many of our sociologists take the absurd position that their science is "objective," and that they can take no sides, as if mere description and labeling of phenomena can be called science!

What authority have our social sciences, and what lawmaker or executive pays any attention to "academic" conclusions? Did not a President of the United States sign a vicious and reactionary tariff bill despite the warnings and protests of over 1,000 professors of economics? Even Thomas Hobbes drily remarked that the judgments of the social sciences were heeded only when they did not threaten profits or desired pleasures. And Macauley admitted that Harvey's discovery of the circulation of blood would have been obstinately denied and flouted if economic interests had dictated such opposition thereto.

Infinitely more can be done for justice and social peace by horse sense, sound practical judgment, than by any social science provided *there be good will*—the will to discuss issues in a reasonable spirit, to entertain the opponent's view with some patience and tolerance, to put aside mere prejudice and vague antipathies and suspicions. Experience has demonstrated that in industry, as in other fields, the success of conciliation, arbitration, and tactful mediation depends on the degree of confidence one has initially in those methods. Confidence, in turn, is the fruit of habit and practice. And good habits *can* be cultivated.

Our educational policies and methods need to be revised and reconstructed in the light of the developments of the last several decades. Undue dependence on science or the intellect has led to the neglect of the emotions. The training, disciplining and *taming* of some of these must now be attacked in earnest. Without visions, nations perish; without virtue, individuals, groups, classes, and nations relapse into savagery. To realize these truths is not to despair of humanity, but to turn systematically to new ways and means of building character and virtue. The churches, like the schools, must play their part in the work of reorganizing education and molding human character. Certain modest social and cultural agencies, relatively new, will require aid and attention. The essential thing is to face the old problem soberly and candidly.

It is strange but true that few of our Humanists have faced it in the right way. There has been considerable talk lately of "scientific" Humanism, as distinguished from religious or mystical Humanism. An eminent and thoughtful British liberal has even advised us to restate the gospel of Jesus in modern non-theological, and scientific terms in order to give it more effectiveness in an age of skepticism and positivism.



Humanism is scientific. But it is not science that makes one fall in love with the ideas and objectives of Humanism. Love your neighbor as part of yourself is perfectly good science, despite the verdict of some psycho-analytic schools upon the unconscious. Altruism is as natural as egoism, mutual aid as self-interest. But what can science do where there is no love for the neighbor, when, indeed, hate governs conduct? Goodness and kindness need the light of science. But where goodness and kindness are absent, that light will not be sought.

The modern temper may be skeptical and positivist, but do those qualities banish love and implant hate? Is good will a concomitant of credulity and ignorance? Justice, mercy, and humility are not ideas merely, they are also sentiments. On them and with them scientific Humanism can be built. But they are not to be taken for granted. To repeat, our problem today is just the problem of ways and means of generating and fostering these sentiments. All other problems are secondary, to say the least. Solve the basic, the paramount, problem, and the solutions of all the others will, because of our intelligence and our technology, prove to be an easy task.

It may not be wholly superfluous to remind the younger generation that the social settlement movement and social work generally are attributable primarily to good will and secondarily to intelligence. It will be recalled that John Ruskin, in starting his St. George colony, was animated by the irresistible urge to do what lay in his power for the disinherited, oppressed, and neglected classes. As he said, the social and economic injustices which he witnessed rendered him so wretched and so indignant that he could not wait a week or a day but was constrained to go to work at once and set an example of humane and just organization of society. Jane Addams, Lillian Wald, Mary MacDowell, Arnold Toynbee, and other eminent social workers might have used Ruskin's language to describe their respective decisions to establish social settlements for the benefit of the poor, downtrodden, exploited, and bewildered inhabitants of slums. The social worker is a Humanist first of all; he wants to serve and help. He is emphatically his brother's keeper. He must do what he can to ameliorate, assuage, improve, correct things. He may have a radical philosophy, but he is also a pragmatist. He is interested in immediate and practical problems. He is benevolent, sensitive, tender-hearted, and he hates cruelty and injustice. He is a scientific Humanist, however, and old-fashioned charity does not satisfy him.

The spirit of the social settlement can and must be carried, as Jane Addams carried it, into the larger spheres of national and international relations. Totalitarianism kills good will; and good will, guided by intelligence, will destroy totalitarianism.



## ETHICS AND TWO NIHILISMS

In the seventies of the 19th century there was a school, or movement, in Russia which called itself, and was called by eminent novelists and critics, Nihilism. Turgenev's Bazarov, the hero of the famous masterpiece, *Fathers and Sons*, was the typical Nihilist of the period, and his creator, Turgenev, admitted in his diary that he had shared some of Bazarov's cardinal ideas. The Nihilists rejected religion and all conventional morality. They said they did not believe in any ethical principles. They were guided by science, and science only. Where there was no science to guide them, they pleased themselves, they consulted their personal tastes. But they were civilized persons, and their tastes were not criminal, vulgar, or coarse.

This school of thought proved short-lived. Most of its adherents joined the Socialist-Revolutionary movement, became Populists, carried on propaganda in the villages and factories, worked, suffered, died for "land and freedom." The ex-Nihilists became passionate champions of the rights of the masses and of Western republicanism and constitutionalism. In the present century, in Russia, no one has called himself a Nihilist.

In the West, however, including the United States, there is an unorganized trend toward a new Nihilism, a trend for which certain philosophers are indirectly responsible. These contemporary Nihilists reject ethical principles; affirm that there is no science of ethics, and take the position that conduct is merely a matter of feeling and taste. We like certain ways and fashions, or we dislike them. There is no absolute standard of right. You cannot prove, they assert, that the Ten Commandments, or any other set of rigid injunctions, are necessary and desirable for all men under all conditions. To disobey them may be inexpedient, but it is not immoral or wrong.

The words and actions of many educated young men and women leave no doubt as to their essential Nihilism or, as some of them say, Ethical Agnosticism. They have little use for abstractions and general ideas, they tell us. They have had just enough second-hand or third-hand acquaintance with relativism, pragmatism, skepticism, and the critical attitude to suppose that the spirit and method of science warrant a demand for laboratory technique and procedure in realms where these are patently impossible. This misapprehension, of course, lands them in glaring absurdities.

Now, ethics is not an exact science, but it is nonetheless a science. You cannot prove, by deliberately undertaken experiments, that honesty is the best policy in business, or that there is pleasure in giving pleasure, or that mutual aid is as natural as aggressive competition. But it is childish to deny that in the millennia which have elapsed since the Dawn of Conscience in Egypt some 7,000 years ago (according to Breasted) mankind has had ample experience in many parts of the world to justify certain large inductions, or general principles. Besides, there is such a thing as common sense, and science, in the words of Huxley, is merely organized common sense.

Common sense needs no laboratory techniques to conclude that without respect for life, freedom within certain limits, property, reputation, and voluntary agreements no society could possibly exist or thrive. If there is to be order, security, and comfort, the great majority of the citizens in a given community must refrain from killing one another, stealing from one another, forging signatures, breaking contracts, libeling one another. A minority may indeed violate all or some of these re-



quisites, but they will not thereby destroy the community. They will be treated as criminals and, when duly convicted, segregated or banished or put to death.

Thus we see that ordinary, commonplace morality is based on social and individual utility. Moses brought down to the Israelites the Tables of the Law, which, on the whole, summed up the wisdom of the community he led. The climate of opinion and sentiment of his time and people determined the form and mode of his gospel, but whether or not he really believed that Jehovah dictated the commandments, or imagined that he had heard the voice from heaven, we cannot know. Be this as it may, the people needed divine sanction for the restraints and prohibitions he imposed. A frank appeal to utility alone would scarcely have answered his great purpose as Lawgiver. Even today most of us do not live up to our fundamental beliefs. Our passions and appetites are more powerful than our ideas. We cannot always, or easily, subordinate present satisfactions to probable future pleasures or benefits. We do wrong because the flesh is weak and we cannot resist certain temptations. We run grave risks despite warnings not only of moralists but of physicians as well. Venereal disease illustrates this unpleasant truth. Such facts as these, however, do not destroy the case of the philosophical utilitarians. We do not need supernaturalism to support our present general and ordinary ethical standards.

The case is different, it must be conceded, where conduct becomes definitely altruistic, where self-denial involves hardships and sacrifices. Common sense will not agree that utilitarian considerations fully account for this kind of behavior. Men who fight and die for causes that cannot possibly benefit them personally—for social or political reform, for example, or national unity, or world federation—do not expect rewards of any sort. They are animated by ideals, by love of truth, beauty, or goodness.

The philosophical utilitarians contend that such men as these act in the instances supposed not from a sense of duty, not in a spirit of sacrifice, but from a profound desire to fulfill or realize their exceptional natures. Their ideals and principles, in other words, are part of themselves, and they would not be happy, or at peace with themselves, if they did not work and, if necessary, fight and take risks in behalf of their convictions and sentiments.

There is no doubt that this interpretation is sound and valid up to a certain point. Does it cover *all* the known facts concerning altruistic behavior? Possibly not. We must not overlook the consideration, emphasized by Nietzsche and others, that there is no small ingredient of inordinate pride and vanity in apparent altruism. At any rate, the last word has certainly not been said by psychology and other sciences on the problem of motivation in human conduct, or on human nature in general. To eke out explanations in this field by appeals to supernaturalism is wholly illegitimate and contrary to the spirit of science or philosophy.

But let us return to the question whether, as hinted above, distinguished and influential thinkers have given aid and comfort to the ethical Nihilists of our day. Let me quote from the timely and instructive volume, *Philosophy in American Education*, by Prof. Brand Blanchard. In a chapter on the climate of opinion, he says:

What is still harder for some to bear, it (Positivism) has gone on to deny the possibility of a normative science of ethics. It is inclined to hold that ethical judgments, like those of metaphysics, are not significant statements at all; they are neither true nor false; they are merely expressions of attitude or feeling on the part of those who make them. Thus, no objectively valid judgment about the good, no objectively valid standard of right or wrong is any longer credible.

Of course, to deny the possibility of a normative science of ethics,



as Professor Blanshard points out, is to imply that "between approval and condemnation of Nazism there is, objectively, nothing to choose."

Millions of lay persons would be amazed and shocked by such an implication as this. And they would indignantly repudiate any school of self-styled philosophers who sympathize with it. What, they would ask, is meant by the phrase "objective judgments of standards" in a discussion of morals or the science of ethics? Ideas of morality are human, and if several hundred million educated and half-educated men and women render certain ethical judgments, and accept certain ethical standards, is it illegitimate to consider these tolerably objective? That millions of primitive or savage peoples have different and lower standards and notions is true, but scarcely relevant. We have heard of head-hunters, of African or Australian natives who know nothing of our civilization. But what of that fact? We necessarily have in mind what we call civilization, oriental or occidental, when we talk or write about ethical ideas or practices. Relativity in morals has long been a familiar concept, but so is the concept of standards and principles adhered to, or at least recognized by, millions of civilized peoples, and these are objective enough in a scientific sense. When we say that Beethoven, as a composer, is superior to Offenbach, or Sousa, are we subjective or objective? The question is a futile one. We all know that in certain strata of society Beethoven is not popular, but that does not deter us from taking it for granted that cultivated persons the world over prefer Beethoven to Sousa or Offenbach.

Even Bertrand Russell feels constrained to "admit" that science does not deal with questions of value. But this admission is wholly unwarranted and indeed unscientific. Are not values "facts"? If egoism is a fact, altruism is likewise a fact. Men do act altruistically in many instances, and that is just as important and impressive *a fact* as any other. The Ten Commandments, of course, are disobeyed by many persons in every civilized community, but they are obeyed by many *more* persons in the same communities. Here, then, are facts on both sides of the argument, and neither category can be ignored nor belittled. Alike what we say and what we do daily give evidence of the fact that human beings are not all bad or all good, and that social conduct is the product of very much mixed motives. Common sense fully recognizes this elementary truth, and ethics, as a science, cannot quarrel with common sense and ordinary experience. Is there any reason why it should? The answer is clear.

The superficiality and looseness of the talk about the alleged amorality, or moral neutrality, of science is as irritating as it is difficult to explain. There is nothing new in the fact that scientific inventions and discoveries can be used by base and malicious men for destructive purposes. There has been much excited and hysterical lamentation in connection with the atomic bomb. In the wrong hands, this bomb *may* annihilate all the centers of our civilization! But there is no reason why civilization should run this risk; it has the power and the opportunity to make sure that the right elements of society control the production and use of this terrible weapon. Science *has* something to say about this problem, too. Not physics or astronomy or chemistry, but certainly sociology, ethic, politics, and psychology must demand to be heard on the question of what to do with the atomic bomb, and how to prevent its falling into the wrong hands. The simplest and most convenient and useful tools have been used by criminals—knives, razors, clubs, hemp, hose, and what not.

Science is the work of human beings called scientists. Are the members of society amoral, or neutral morally? *Certainly not.* They are charged with certain tasks, but if other tasks required by society are neglected under our present division of labor, the men of science can properly be called upon to devote some time and energy to these neg-



lected tasks. The protection of our civilization and the safeguarding of our basic rights need not be left entirely to lawyers and politicians, or soldiers. The atomic age has its own problems, and the solution of them should and must be attended to by those who are the logical and natural laborers in that vineyard.

Among those who assert that science has nothing to say about moral or social values, and does not seek to determine the ends or purposes for which inventions and discoveries are used, are the adherents of orthodox Christianity. These conservatives argue that there can be no real conflict between science and religion, since they operate in different realms. In such assertions as this, clearly, the term science is meant to include the social sciences and near-sciences, hence the proposition is *not* true. The social sciences certainly deal with human values—ethical and artistic. And in this work they cannot depart from the method and spirit of the exact sciences. Science rejects or ignores revelation. It relies solely on observation, experimentation, verification, and strict induction from the available data. Our values need no support from revelation, which, indeed, yields an extremely dubious and lame basis for any solid and substantial value. The appeal to revelation plays into the hands of the Nihilists. If we cannot develop a sound and scientific ethical code without the aid of superstition and mysticism, then Nihilism will grow and spread, and ultimately triumph. But knowledge, reason, and common sense, as we have seen, provide together a firm and enlightened foundation for social morality. Our ideals *are* real, in the sense that they have evolved naturally and are part of our intellectual and moral equipment. They are dear and indispensable to us. Our critical intelligence approved of them. They have passed the test of science and pragmatic philosophy.



## PARTIES AND THE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

The totalitarian states have abolished the party system. They do not call themselves absolute tyrannies; they do not admit that they have enslaved the individual and suppressed civil, political, and scientific freedom. They claim to have established *higher* and *better* democracies. When everybody agrees with the Fuehrer, one party is of course sufficient. Those who do not agree need no party and cannot have any, since they are in concentration camps, prison, or exile!

The odd and discouraging fact is that many upholders of democracy now entertain serious doubts regarding the utility of the party system. They would not object to its liquidation, if that could be effected without embracing Hitlerism or Fascism. The abuses of the party system are glaring, indeed, and the disillusioned democrats can render a valuable service to free institutions and popular government by frankly raising the question whether these abuses are *inherent* in the party system or mere excrescences removable by intelligence and good will.

The question is by no means new. George Washington's denunciation of partyism—it was known then as "factionalism"—has not been forgotten by thoughtful students of American political history. Washington saw no necessity for parties, and his own elections were achieved without that instrumentality. He witnessed the small beginnings of partyism, however, and he did not relish them. To him they were symptoms of moral decay, of unpatriotic intolerance, of anarchy in the body politic. His warning to the republic against factionalism was stern and impressive.

It proved futile, because the differences between the Jeffersonians and the Hamiltonians were too deep and too important to be adjusted without an open break and an appeal to the people by means of issues formulated in so-called platforms. The early issues are still with us, even though neither of the two major parties has been wholly consistent with respect to them.

The party system in a democratic government is apparently inevitable. Only one alternative system has ever been tentatively proposed, and that, on close examination, proves to be unworkable and impracticable. The reference is to the plan sketched in the two-volume work published by a Russian thinker and writer, M. M. Ostrogorsky, about a quarter of a century ago. In that able and scholarly work the League plan was suggested as a desirable substitute for the party plan. The British Free Trade League, the American Anti-Saloon League, the non-partisan League of Nations Association—these and similar agencies have certainly demonstrated that men and women who differ politically and belong to different parties can and do work together harmoniously for some specific and urgent purpose. Thus the League idea is an invaluable contribution to political science and political technique. It does not follow, however, that it offers a dependable and effective *substitute* for the party idea. In a party, men work for several purposes simultaneously and these purposes may be, and often are, interrelated, subordinated to, and logically deducible from, a general and central principle. The first parties in America illustrated this truth. The Jeffersonians had several planks in their platforms, and so had the Hamiltonians. The situation demanded parties, not leagues. A league to promote several purposes is a party, and has all the virtues and all the vices of a party.

Of course, the two-party system, where it grows out of social and economic conditions, is preferable to the multiple party system as known under the French Republic or the short-lived German Republic. Even in the United States the two-party system has been tempered and vitalized



by the minor parties—the Greenbackers, the Populists, the Socialists, the Farmer-Labor party. Suppress the minor parties, the advanced parties that fight for unpopular reforms without the hope of capturing the White House or Congress, and the major parties degenerate into organized appetites, and forget principles. Means become ends. Fear of defeat paralyzes them, and progress is barred for an indefinite period.

We must now return to the question: What can be done to reduce to a minimum the grave abuses which the party system develops everywhere—timidity, cowardice, shortsighted opportunism, sacrifice of professed goals, love of spoils and power?

One serious effect of these abuses is not stressed as often as it should be—namely, the degradation and perversion of the pre-election campaigns. We hear much about the *education* of the huge and heterogeneous electorate by these campaigns. The fond notion that a political campaign is a great debate in which the several parties appeal to the reason of the electorate, present the actual issues involved fairly and conscientiously, and thus clarify difficult and complex problems, is based not on facts, but on wishful thinking. Campaigns are, as a rule, dirty, bitter, dishonest, and mendacious. Issues are distorted. Appeals are made to known prejudices and hatreds. Intimidation is practiced, fears aroused. Reckless statements are common, and when a lie is exposed, no apology follows. The lie may even be repeated, and other lies added.

Our campaigns have always been dirty, but some have been dirtier than others. The last one was almost as vicious and malicious as the McKinley-Bryan campaign of 1896. Bryan was called an anarchist, repudiator of national and individual debts, demagogue, champion of immoral ideas, what not, and all because he advocated bimetallism at a certain ratio. McKinley, the Republican candidate, had himself favored bimetallism in Congress and had complained that President Cleveland, in his fiscal policies, had “dishonored one of our precious metals, silver.” Wage-workers were told that if Bryan should be elected, the factories would not reopen on the morrow of the balloting and they would better stay at home. Was this education? Was it education, in the last campaign, to tell the voters that President Roosevelt had telephoned to those gangsters, Hitler and Mussolini, and had sold Czechoslovakia down the river? Was it education to warn the voters that the republic was in danger and that it could be saved only by defeating Roosevelt, who was deceiving the country, signing secret treaties, and plotting to take the United States into the war?

But it is unnecessary to multiply illustrations of wilful dishonesty and outrageous mendacity. No wonder many self-respecting persons shun politics and the whole political process. No wonder the very word politician is almost synonymous with trickster, humbug, or hypocrite.

To attend a partisan political meeting in the midst of a hard-fought election is to despair of humanity. The audience is easily converted by rant and vehemence into a frantic mob. It wildly cheers vituperation, abuse, and mud-slinging. It is not interested in argument; it wants poison gas directed at the “enemy.”

The party system cannot long survive such discreditable and indecent tactics. Hosts of persons will turn in disgust to the totalitarian alternative. We must give earnest thought to the problem of cleaning up and purging our campaigns, of bettering our partisan strategy and tactics. Drifting will not mend matters. Pollyanna optimism will not solve the problem.

Slow and genuine education alone can solve it. But the education must start early—in the grade school, in all our churches, in our forums, clubs, civic organizations, and in the respectable press. Colleges and universities should offer courses in propaganda analysis, and should teach students the difference between educational speeches and demagoguery,



between a fair discussion of real issues and mere invective and billingsgate.

Courses in legitimate, intellectually honest debating are possible and needful. Our students are not taught intellectual integrity; but they could be, by striking examples taken from our history and from current politics. They can be shown how not to do it, and how to do it, if democracy is to work and the people are to be intelligent and sincere in exercising their political rights and privileges.

Such education and training will, at the very start, utterly reject the fallacious and preposterous idea that "the duty of the opposition is to oppose." Many evil practices can be traced to that false slogan. The duty of the opposition is to watch, offer honest criticism *where it is warranted*, and suggest alternative and sounder measures. It is equally the duty of the opposition to support proper and necessary measures, where inaction is dangerous and unwise. No enlightened friend of democracy objects to candid and vigorous criticism when it is justified and deserved. No one demands silence on the part of the opposition when it has something helpful to say. The objection is to falsification, distortion, and plain lying for the sake of party success.

The two-party system can be revived and purified, rendered worthy and useful to democracies. Under the party system cooperation in dealing with great problems is not impossible, given the right leadership. Problems are solved by science, common sense, and good will. The party system need not banish these factors. Where they are banished, the party system is abused, not utilized as an effective means to an end—the end being good government, progressive government, unselfish government.

Let us not, said Lord Morley, ask more of human nature than it is capable of yielding. Bigots and fanatics we shall have with us always, even in theology and letters. But we must fight partisan bigotry in democratic politics, fight it and reduce it to a minimum. This, surely, is not asking too much of average human nature in a land as blessed as the United States.



## THE PERSISTENCE OF UTOPIAN THINKING

Although our age claims to be eminently positive, practical, and realistic, Utopian thinking characterizes and vitiates many of our reform plans. Indeed, the persistence of Utopianism in quarters where one would least expect it is a phenomenon which has not received the attention it demands. Some time ago, Louis Wallis, a disciple of Henry George, had the courage to speak of the "Utopianism" of his admired master, and to express the opinion that the so-called single tax movement would have fared much better than it has if George had not, like Ibsen's Brand, demanded "all or nothing"—expropriation of economic rent, the abolition of all taxes, save that on land values, and the repeal of all tariff laws by a stroke of the pen. Since the death of Henry George, many of the "single taxers" have virtually dropped the Utopian elements in their gospel and are now intelligently advocating gradualism in the realization of their program, as well as important concessions in the objectives themselves. The "single" tax, like the Syndicalists' "general" strike, is what Vernon Lee called "a vital lie." The slogan serves some purpose, no doubt; but there never will be a *single* tax. The idea of taxing more and more heavily the rental value of land, and land held for speculation, is, however, gaining ground, as it should.

Karl Marx professed the most withering contempt for the Utopian schools of Socialism—St. Simonism, Fourierism, Owenism, and the like. He and his followers plumed themselves on their absolute freedom from sentimentality, wishful thinking, doctrinairism, Utopianism. They are strictly and rigorously scientific, we are solemnly assured. However, there is plenty of Utopianism in Marxian Socialism. The assertion that under Socialism the State will gradually fade away is Utopian. The State is merely another name for *organized society*, and society will insist on organizing itself as long as there are antisocial persons—idlers, loafers, chisellers, slanderers, parasites, aggressors. Again, Marx assigned to the proletariat a role which that group perversely refuses to play. The great majority of the proletarians are *not* revolutionary and do *not* trust the intellectual vanguard which, according to Marx, is the natural, historically ordained guide and interpreter of the working class. It is Utopian to imagine that the dictatorship *for* the proletariat is necessarily and inevitably the dictatorship *of* the proletariat. Finally, it is Utopian to assert that the middle class will increasingly cooperate and identify itself with the wage workers, who "have nothing to lose but their chains." The middle class may have little actual stake in the present system; it may steadily sink lower and lower and be even worse off than the upper strata of the working class; but it regards itself as superior to the latter, and evinces precious little sympathy with it in crises and class struggles. *As a class thinketh, so it is!* Marxian "science" and Marxian dialectical interpretations of history are seen to be unmistakable instances of wishful thinking and Procrustean manipulation of facts in the interest of a prejudice or dogma.

### THE CASE OF MR. WELLS

Another unconscious Utopian is H. G. Wells, who so easily detects Utopian heresies in others. Mr. Wells, in truth, is strangely paradoxical in his thinking. He sat at the feet of the great Huxley, and his education, though limited, was certainly scientific as far as it went. There is no metaphysical or pseudo-philosophical nonsense about him. He is, he fancies, thoroughly realistic. Yet he has fallen a victim to one Utopia.



after another, has tried to build castles upon sand, has launched sweeping generalizations with absurdly little support from known and observable facts and has indulged in more moonshine than many a confessed sentimentalist and dreamer.

Mr. Wells tells us that a race is in progress between "catastrophe and education," but his assaults upon our educational systems impose upon one the conclusion that education has no chance whatever in the race, if, indeed, it does not *contribute* to the victory of catastrophe. He talks in terms of a world State, a world currency, a world flag, and heaps scorn upon the "foreign offices," State departments and embassies, which to him are offensive nuisances. But the present tragic and menacing world situation, with its fanatical Nationalisms, its rabid and savage anti-Semitism, its vain and costly efforts to establish Autarchy or self-sufficiency in economic life, its Chinese tariff walls, its frenzied armament rivalries, its preparations for another great war, scarcely warrants Wells's approach to the solution of our grave problems. *He addresses himself to sentiments not yet born, to a spirit not yet released.* Nothing could be more futile, more unrealistic.

Again, in dealing with the social, economic, and political questions of our time, Mr. Wells naturally asked himself the question, Which social group or groups are most likely to work either unselfishly or from motives of enlightened self-interest or for both reasons for the gradual, peaceful, experimental solutions of those problems? The masses of the people, the average bodies of men and women, he despairs of, and is frank enough to say that he *expects no help from them*. Unlike Marx, he has no faith in alleged historic roles which social forces play unwittingly and, as it were, despite themselves. The masses, Mr. Wells holds, are too ignorant and too stupid to assume any positive and constructive part in the social drama. They can be inflamed and enraged; they can be converted into savage and destructive mobs; but reform and reconstruction are tasks quite beyond them. Whom, then, *are* the intelligent humanists and liberals to turn to for aid and guidance, for initiative and example? Mr. Wells's answer to this question has not been certain or consistent. He has shifted his ground several times. His first suggestion, it will be remembered, was that men and women of right feeling and intelligence form a "Western Samurai," devote themselves to study and contemplation, and fit themselves for disinterested and wise public service. There is something attractive about this old idea, but Mr. Wells soon realized that his elite would isolate itself from the working, suffering, and fighting members of the community and that its influence would be nil. He dropped the suggestion.

He resurveyed the social scene and discovered the modern engineer and technician. Here, surely, is the proper liaison agency to conciliate, mediate, and adjust differences between capital and labor, investors and consumers, creditors and debtors. Let the engineers and technicians reorganize our economic system on a scientific basis and make it work; let them abolish unemployment, iron out the business curve, do away with the cycles in industry, render strikes and lockouts unnecessary, curb greed and monopoly, and assuredly the rest of us, with our brutish admiration for genius and skill, will cheerfully acquiesce, and celebrate the emergence of the good society. This dream was a revival of St. Simonism, and rule developments soon shattered it. The engineers, unfortunately, prefer to take orders from the industrialists and capitalists, and many of them *agree* with their masters. So the engineers and technicians had to be consigned to the outer darkness—and were!

Mr. Wells turned next to the successful and socially minded industrialists. He had discovered some rare specimens of that type. Why should not the rich, satisfied, and intelligent captain of industry inaugurate a new economic and social order? No longer greedy or insecure, that industrialist might well develop a new ambition—to reform society,



end poverty and strife, and promote human happiness. Alas, this Utopia proved shorter-lived than any of the others. The great majority of the industrialists have no quarrel with the present system; they may have all the *wealth* they want, but they love power, lack vision, and are not interested in theories of social reconstruction.

So now Mr. Wells is constrained to join the up-to-date variety of the "worse-ists." We are doomed; education *cannot* avert catastrophe. Western civilization is sick unto death, and must die. Another world war is inevitable, and *after* the ruin, chaos, and despair which it will entail, the miserable and scattered survivors in Europe and America will perforce seek salvation in the Socialist *World State*.

This is wishful thinking with a vengeance. Spengler was more realistic than Mr. Wells. If we cannot avert another world war, or several such wars, the death of our Faustian civilization will be followed by a Dark Age, not by a Socialist World State; by confusion and demoralization, not by a new, bright synthesis.

### LEFT, RIGHT, AND CENTER VARIETIES

It might be supposed that Utopianism is confined to the radical reformers—the Single-Taxers, the Socialists, the Communists. This is not so. There *are* Utopians in the opposite camp, among the self-styled individualists and libertarians. There is, e.g., our friend Albert J. Nock, a graceful writer and a polished, civilized person. Mr. Nock hates the New Deal and all its works. He would not like, he says, to purchase abundance "at the price of even formal and distant relations" with Roosevelt, Ickes, and Hopkins. He would rather starve—e.g., *see millions of ordinary people starve*—than give up his personal and individual sovereignty. Indeed, our real enemy is *the State!* The true remedy for our ills is philosophical anarchism, or something remarkably like it. Of all the possible and impossible Utopias, that of the Philosophical Anarchists is, of course, the most preposterous one. How many persons in the world of today can even *imagine* a society without the State? The first thing people do under pioneering conditions is to organize a government. The first thing people in distress do at any time is to appeal to the State for aid. The American farmers do not regard the State as *their* enemy. They are grateful to it for small favors; and organized labor is equally grateful for like favors. If the State is the enemy, what is Plutocracy, and what is predatory big business? What is the lynching mob? The few closet philosophers who sigh for Anarchism are totally irrelevant; they have no conception of human nature as it is, or of life as it is lived. Time, place, conditions, realities mean nothing to them. *They contribute nothing to the solution of the current problems which menace civilization.* They simply do not count now, they might as well migrate to the moon.

There is Mr. Walter Lippmann, the ex-liberal of semi-collectivist leanings who once advocated the acquisition and operation of the railroads by the Federal Government as a means of "integrating America." Mr. Lippmann abhors collectivism now, and quotes Adam Smith on natural liberty and the "simple" social order based on free enterprise and free contract. Bureaucracy fills him with dread. Economic planning is anathema, since, he contends—without a scintilla of actual proof—that regimentation of industry is *bound* to lead to regimentation of thought and destruction of spiritual values. Mr. Lippmann recognizes that the present order is not ideal, and certainly Adam Smith would find it neither simple, natural, nor free. But, says Mr. Lippmann, let us attack and wipe out all existing monopolies and existing privileges, instead of extending monopoly and privilege to classes or groups that have long been the victims of that system. Let us establish the system which Smith postulated and imagined, not that which actually existed in his day. Let us *better* the instructions of the classical



school and get rid of the abuses and evils of capitalism. A purified, re-deemed, and humanized capitalism should be our goal, not any regimented collectivist society. The Government should return to the Spenserian idea of its function of umpire and harmonizer, and all abuses in the economic system should be corrected by the judiciary, not by bureaucratic administrative agencies.

Mr. Lippmann has a legislative program, too, which business and finance consider to be radical and unnecessary. The chances of enacting that program into law, Mr. Lippmann admits, are very slight. Yet he vehemently opposes paternalistic measures for the benefit of farmers, wage-workers, and other groups. His position is Utopian in that it fails to take account of human nature, of the patent futility of his proposals, and of the impossibility of turning the clock of history back and reversing an inevitable process. Monopoly and entrenched privilege will not permit the adoption of a genuine and consistent libertarian economic system. They want the perpetuation of the *status quo*, and *their* appeals to individualism are hollow and insincere.

There is no *realism* in Mr. Lippmann's perfectionist gospel. It is doctrinaire. We must resign ourselves to liberal doses of paternalism and collectivism, and meantime seek to preserve intellectual and spiritual freedom by the means now available, and, if these be insufficient, devise new and more effective means. Not even orthodox socialists would today favor *political* operation of any industry, or *bureaucratic* direction and management of any business. The T.V.A. is not political nor bureaucratic, whatever we may think of its internecine controversies and difficulties. The device of the public corporation, semi-independent and divorced from the spoils system, is at least a partial response to the demand for efficiency and sound business standards in State-owned and State-operated industries. That device is doubtless imperfect, but its principle is sound and characteristically modern. The idea of a government yardstick in the field of regulated public utilities is another admirable innovation designed to protect the public against extortion and overcapitalization as well as against bureaucratic red tape and inefficiency. It is not impossible to secure a fair and scientific use of the yardstick, once the idea is accepted by the public and the lawmakers. In several other ways State operation can be safeguarded against either political or bureaucratic abuses. Give American (and human) ingenuity and skill a chance!

### HUXLEY'S ERRORS

Consider, now, the case of Aldous Huxley. This gifted novelist, who was so often accused of cynicism and of contempt for humanity, has become a militant moralist and champion of peace, spiritual regeneration of the individual, and uncompromising loyalty to first principles. He is, of course, definitely on the side of the angels. But is he realistic; does he see things as they are; or is he, on the contrary, imagining vain things and asking of human nature more than it is capable of giving? *The idealist who is not also a pragmatist is not useful in the fight for justice, progress, and righteousness.* He may do more harm than good. The selfish and stubborn reactionaries are not afraid of him.

In his recent volume of essays entitled *Ends and Means*, Mr. Huxley reaches conclusions for which history, psychology, and sociology furnish no warrant whatever. In other words, he is utterly unscientific, and if the social sciences are to offer us any guidance at all, they must eschew wishful thinking, build firmly and solidly on facts, and avoid hasty and superficial generalizations. There is no conflict between sound practice and sound theory, but no theory is sound unless all the known facts are explained by it. Mr. Huxley now preaches a perfectionism and a mysticism alien to Western minds as well as to new Oriental trends. Purify and ennoble your own heart, and all will be well with the world. Never



use immoral means to achieve moral ends. In *fighting* Fascism and its tyrannies and absurdities, Democracies must beware of the grave danger of losing the democratic principles and copying Fascism. In attacking Plutocracy and economic despotism, we must adhere at all costs to persuasion and sweet reasonableness. The trouble with society and politics is that we are all "attached" to something—to possessions, to lust, to fame, to philosophy, to art. Salvation lies in ridding ourselves of *all* attachments, and becoming superhuman. The present economic system is bankrupt, and cooperation must supersede monopoly or competition, but the transformation can and must be effected without force, coercion, or injustice to any one. The advantages of Socialism—which Mr. Huxley accepts—can be obtained, he opines, "by making changes in the management of large-scale production," and "there should be no insuperable difficulty" in extending the application of the modern principles already embodied in certain progressive institutions—the T.V.A., or the Port of New York Authority. Page the Girdlers, Fords, Du Ponts, Wilkies, and the members of the Liberty League and the National Manufacturers' Association! Tell *them* the good news! Why fight collective bargaining, government yardsticks, municipal acquisition of utilities, regulation of wages and hours, and elimination of parasitic and superfluous holding companies? "There *should* be no difficulty" in extending collectivism to wider and wider fields!

The fact that Bourbons never learn and never forget; the fact that classes never voluntarily surrender their privileges—as even Dean Inge admitted; the fact that social legislation and social control have been bitterly opposed *at every step* by corporate capital and private privilege; the fact that in 1939 the so-called Christian world is less disposed to lend an ear to a man named Jesus, who had something to say about greed, riches, selfishness, and hypocrisy—these *facts* are overlooked by Mr. Huxley. What history has proved again and again to be humanly impossible "should not be difficult"! Alas, it is very difficult, and statesmen and reformers alike must face facts instead of indulging in daydreaming. *No sane person favors violence, but it will take a good deal of planning and adjusting to avoid violence and adhere to Fabian methods.*

Mr. Huxley's dependence on "nonattached" men and women reminds one of Plato's "guardians"—the supermen, trained for the task of government, freed from all earthly cares, possessing nothing they might call their own, deprived even of individual wives and children! No such persons have ever existed. None are mentioned in the Bible. Jesus was not nonattached. He was passionately attached to his ideals and his doctrines, and had little patience with compromises and shirkers. To love one's neighbor as one's self is to be *attached* to one's neighbor. To love God is to be attached most deeply to what one believes to be the commandments of God.

### LIMITATIONS OF UTOPIANISM

It is strange, indeed, that would-be guides of humanity, reconstructors of civilization, consider themselves completely absolved from the pedestrian task of objectively studying their materials and their tools. You cannot build a bridge, a subway, a cottage, without knowledge of steel, cement, wood, brick, glass, etc. The Utopians serenely plan societies and civilizations in complete ignorance of, and indifference to, the human materials and instruments involved. Environment does much to human nature, it is true, but human nature reacts on the environment and cannot be treated as negligible. The social sciences, in so far as they *are* scientific, can predict how men and women in the mass will act in certain circumstances. It is certain that they will attach themselves to one thing or another. It is certain that they will resent injustice and fight oppression; that they will not commit wholesale suicide nor race suicide; that they will pursue their interests and seek happiness in their own way.



There is a fallacy in Lord Bryce's statement that "democracies are what their leaders make them." Leaders exert influence and for a time, mold the masses who follow them; but, on the other hand, the demands, aspirations, and fears of the masses have to be understood and served by the leaders. And the masses do not always want the same thing. They may surrender liberty for fancied security, or even for bread; *but not for long*. The leaders who do not change their objectives and methods to suit new conditions are thrust aside and sacrificed. Dictators and tyrants are likely to die in exile or in prison. Over-idealistic rulers are generally left behind and find themselves isolated, if not repudiated. As John Morley said, "Do not ask of human nature more than it is capable of yielding."

Sober-minded men and women will not forget that behind abstractions and slogans there are concrete realities—needs, passions, hopes, drives. The social and economic order changeth; institutions die, or evolve; and new occasions teach new policies. *The blind Tory is as Utopian as the visionary radical*. Wise opportunism, sane pragmatism, respect for divergencies of habit and sentiment, give-and-take in reform and cheerful acceptance of the unavoidable—these are the conditions of rational and evolutionary progress. The Utopians may have a modest role to play in the drama of history and progress, but *they* will not solve our problems or direct our course in times of peril, confusion, and stress. Poets and dreamers cannot do the work of engineers, planners, architects and realists.

The American mind is spontaneously pragmatic. The influence of the frontier has not ceased to operate. The American radical, like the American statesman, is a natural opportunist, and the Utopian thinker in America is a pale, shadowy, isolated figure. Trial-and-error is the American and the scientific method of dealing with practical problems. Dr. Albert Shaw once made the profound remark that in the United States all real and serious problems have been solved, virtually, by common consent, despite apparent divergencies and heated, bitter campaigns.

The American reformer, like the American politician, wants and demands results. He will accept half loaves, quarter loaves, rather than wait indefinitely for whole loaves. He wants to feel that he is *moving toward* his goal, and *it is the next step that interests him*.

The conflict between individualism and collectivism is, in America, a sham battle. Collectivists will fight for personal and individual freedom *when that becomes, once more, a vital issue*. Individualists will accept collectivist measures when these appear to be preferable to the alternatives faced by them. The nationalization of the railroads, e.g., is now seen to be inevitable and desirable as the lesser evil.

The intelligent and earnest American may not care to join any party, faction, or school. He may wish to remain independent. But he cannot remain indifferent and morally isolated. If he wields power or influence as a writer, lecturer, or teacher, he will have to ask himself with what trends and tendencies of his day he will wish to associate himself. He must be for the common good, or against it. He must use instruments and weapons that are at hand.

John Morley says in his *Recollections* that "in politics one may have to choose between two blunders." The narrow-minded sectarian may refuse to make such a choice and call for "a plague o' both your houses." The active citizen cannot avoid making his choice. *He will not renounce his ideal; but there is no value in a barren ideal*. There are times and conjunctures when compromise best serves one's ideal. The Utopians and perfectionists overlook that truth. The pragmatist may make mistakes, but in principle and theory his course is sound—he does that which, on the whole, in his judgment, will tend to promote justice and progress in his community and in the world.



## EDITORIAL WRITERS AS HESSIANS

Several years ago Walter Duranty wrote a book of recollections and impressions under the somewhat enigmatic title, *I Write as I Please*. One implication was that not all newspaper correspondents write as they please. Of course, any able, experienced, self-respecting journalist will not write falsehoods just to please his editor or publisher. But there are such things as emphasis, tone, proportion, in dispatches, reports, comments, and interpretations of events and occurrences. Few foreign correspondents can afford to disregard or flout the prejudices of their respective editors. There are degrees of independence, and consciences are elastic. It is human to wish to please the boss who pays your salary and has the power to increase it if he particularly likes your work.

However, this piece is written to call attention not to foreign correspondents as a group, most of whom have reputations, but to the little known, or wholly obscure and unknown, writers of editorial articles. The editor-in-chief of a daily newspaper may or may not write for his editorial columns. He is too busy, as a rule, to write much, and he has assistants, men and women supposed to be qualified by education, native talent and experience, to write what the British call "leaders" on political, economic, ethical, and miscellaneous topics. There are several thousand editorial writers in this country, and only a few of them have achieved fame. The great majority, when they retire or die, remain "unwept, unhonored, and unsung."

Editorial writers must, then, have "a passion for anonymity," like some of President Roosevelt's personal secretaries. They are, as a rule, fairly well paid, but theirs is by no means the highest pay on a newspaper. They love their work; they take pride in it and are envied by the average reporter, desk man, feature writer, and others of the force. But their position in this country is distinctly anomalous. *They* seldom write "as they please." Many of them are content to take their ideas from the editor-in-chief or the publisher, and supply only the manner, the style, the expression. Some seek to put a little of their own thought into the pieces they write. They feel no moral responsibility for their editorials. After all, they say, it is the paper that editorializes, and their own part is comparable to that played by the typesetter or the proofreader.

A recent and rather extreme instance of this apologetic attitude was that of the New York free lance who was accused publicly of writing isolationist editorials for one paper and interventionist editorials for another. He angrily resented the impeachment, not because it was not well-founded, but because, as he put it, he is a "professional" writer and therefore is prepared to furnish any matter desired and liberally rewarded! Moreover, he threatened libel proceedings against any critic who should presume to reflect upon his professional integrity! Clearly, to this accommodating journalist, the professional writer is a Hessian, an adventurer who cheerfully sells his skill to the highest bidder. Our irritated friend is not familiar with our libel laws. Truth is now a good defense in any libel proceeding. We have abandoned the bizarre common-law notion that "the greater the truth, the greater the libel."

The present writer knows a good many mature editorial writers who say frankly that when they turn out pieces dictated by their bosses, in violation of their own opinion and sentiments, they are intellectual prostitutes. They do not indulge in any sophistical justifications of their behavior. They are not happy. They blame the American practice of employing editorial writers without asking them whether they are conservatives, liberals, radicals, or revolutionists; whether they favor free trade



or high protection, the single gold standard or a managed currency, economic planning, or the system of private enterprise. It is a fact that when you apply for an editorial job, you are asked what your experience has been in that field, what education you have received, and what questions you are qualified to treat with reasonable competence. You are not asked whether you share the views expressed by the paper you wish to join and adorn.

It is also a fact that in Europe the situation is very different. No writer applies for an editorial job on a paper whose policies he disapproves. No British Liberal would seek a job on a Tory paper, and no Tory would think of offering to write on politics for a Liberal newspaper. In France, each party or political group has its organs, and editorials are written by representatives of the party which any given newspaper systematically serves. Clemenceau wrote the leaders of his several papers. So did Leon Blum, and so did Jean Jaures.

To the European journalist of any rate, the American practice of employing men to write editorials to order, without any regard for the personal convictions of the writer, appears odd, anomalous and discreditable morally. It is another illustration of "American materialism and commercialism."

To be sure, some American editors have plumed themselves on the fact that they do not ask any editorial writer to say things he does not believe to be true or sound. At the editorial conference usually held in the morning, topics are discussed freely and severally assigned to those who appear willing or anxious to handle them properly, without ifs and buts, and in accordance with the opinions of the boss. Occasionally, therefore, an editorial writer will escape the unpleasant duty of writing what he considers a wrong piece, or a piece in favor of a wrong candidate for office. But these occasions are not important in the total situation. Few care to render their jobs insecure by shirking, by dodging certain topics, by claiming exemptions and privileges. Few editorial writers like to be dubbed cranky or "difficult," no matter what the boss may say by way of reassurance. Finally, and above all, no editorial writer wants to surrender the major political topics to his colleagues and confine himself to minor editorials, or to innocuous "fillers." If you are not in full sympathy with the politics of your paper, you are not likely to be asked to comment on presidential candidates, party platforms, acceptance addresses, or legislation of moment by the party in power. The net result is that gradually you suppress your scruples, thrust aside your personal convictions, and write to suit the editor and the publisher. This does not make for peace of mind and constant joy in your work.

In a recent issue of George Seldes' weekly, *In Fact*, the following statement was contained in an article on the Press:

One of the most amazing features of journalism in the eight years of the existence of the American Newspaper Guild is the fact that in almost every case where the press is 80 or 99 percent for or against something, the men who write for the press are exactly on the opposite side. The press was 85 to 95 percent against Roosevelt for President, the newspaper men 85 to 95 percent for Roosevelt. . . . It is interesting to note that the men who write for the papers are against Hearst, McCormick, Patterson, Roy Howard, the rules of the Associated Press, Westbrook Pegler, and all labor-baiters.

This may seem too sweeping to outsiders, but the insiders find no exaggeration in the statements. The situation, to repeat, is indeed paradoxical and anomalous.

The doctrinaire will have his rough explanation—"the class struggle." The publishers and editors-in-chief are "haves," the journalists under them are "have-nots," proletarians, he will say. But this is not true. The present writer has had for colleagues in the Chicago editorial



rooms sons of bakers, of newspaper business managers, of clergymen, of leading lawyers. And he knows that these editorial writers voted for Roosevelt, not for Hoover, Landon or Wilkie, whom the papers they wrote for supported militantly.

Ethically, this is hardly normal or desirable. Not all the newspaper writers need share the ideas and sentiments of their bosses, but certainly those who have to advocate policies, interpret the news, and carry on crusades ought to believe what they urge the public to believe. Sincerity and honesty in editorial writing, the moralists surely will agree, would elevate the standards of American journalism. The actual situation breeds cynicism and public contempt for the editorial page. And the editorial writers would respect themselves more and lead happier lives.

Some honored and influential magazine editors have been called the "uncles" of the editorial writers' fraternity. Might not avuncular benevolence start a quiet movement for the moralization and redemption of journalism? What a noble and liberal profession editorial writing is potentially and *could* become actually!



## ANTI-SEMITISM: WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Some problems, it has been said, are never solved, but they cease to trouble our minds because they are forgotten. Other problems are too painful and too pregnant with mischief to be thrust aside and forgotten, but we may despair of finding any real solution of them, and so we try to ignore and avoid them.

The Negro problem in the United States is clearly in the latter category. Many of us hate to think of it and refuse to discuss it. No solution of it is in sight. A prominent Southern lawyer of rather progressive leanings solemnly assured the writer of these lines that the Negro population would disappear, die out because of its unfitness for survival in our relatively severe climate, and that it is futile and foolish to attempt any other solution. Certainly few white Southerners will admit the possibility, even at a remote future, of assimilation as a desirable solution.

The Jewish problem, or anti-Semitism, *apparently* belongs to the same category. The recent and present developments in France, in Italy, and elsewhere, in respect of the Jewish problem, under the pressure and influence of Hitlerism, must have forced hosts of liberal advocates of assimilation to conclude, reluctantly, that that remedy has been rejected by the most advanced European nations, and is no longer to be seriously entertained in the Western hemisphere. If the policy of gradual assimilation is dead, then the Jewish situation is more tragic and desperate than that of the Negro in America. No one will affirm that the climate of Europe or America will eventually kill all the Jews who live in those parts of the world. Not even the hope of natural extinction is open to these despised and persecuted millions!

But perhaps so gloomy a conclusion is premature. After all, a civilized solution of the Jewish problem may still be evolved by men and women of good will and intelligence. A candid and sober consideration of this difficult and complex question assuredly will yield suggestions of merit toward a solution.

We must begin by pointing out that the problem of anti-Semitism is a gentile problem as well as a Jewish one. If there are steps to be taken, changes in behavior to be effected, the gentiles will have to do things as well as the Jews. Faults, if there are any, will be found in both camps.

What, let us ask, is the head and front of Jewish offending? What crimes and offenses are they charged with having committed and continuing to commit contrary to the dignity, welfare and honor of society, or humanity? Of course, the sweeping charges of the vulgar and hate-ridden anti-Semites of the rabble-rousing type will be totally ignored as being beneath contempt.

The Jews, it is said, are aliens, different, unassimilable, and thus inevitably a source of irritation. In the words of Israel Zangwill, dislike for the unlike is natural enough. But the German Jews were perfectly good and loyal Germans, and more than willing to become organic parts of the German people. That disposition did not save them from the atrocities of Hitlerism. And, after all, intermarriage between them and the gentiles has not been rare, and many wholesome instances of collaboration and cooperation with the gentiles are known to all.

Again, some complain that the Jews have a superiority complex and regard themselves still as the chosen people. They send no missionaries to the gentile elements; they speak of tolerance, not of mutual sympathy and genuine, friendly understanding. This is true enough, but is it strange? Their emancipation and social or political enfranchisement are



too recent to warrant on their part anything more than the modest expectation of a live-and-let-live attitude. Indeed, more would have been resented as impudence by a majority of the average gentiles.

Are the Jews as a so-called race less virtuous, less charitable, less law-abiding than any other race? Are Jewish bankers less upright and trustworthy than gentile bankers? Have Jewish governors, cabinet ministers, legislators, judges, mayors and aldermen been less faithful, less public-spirited, less scrupulous than those of any other race or social group? The answer of the intelligent is, No. Statistics of crime and vice fail to sustain any charge of exceptional Jewish trickiness or dishonesty.

To be sure, there *are* ostentatious Jews, aggressive Jews, pushful and loud Jews. And there *are* greedy and miserly Jews. But these are not *race* characteristics. Everybody knows that there are benevolent Jews; quiet, modest, self-respecting Jews; studious, scholarly, noble-minded Jews.

Lessing summed up the Jewish case against the prejudiced and unfair gentiles when he put in the mouth of his Nathan the Wise the simple request, "Treat me as an individual!"

Why should the "good" Jew be punished for the sins of the "bad" Jew? Any wholesale indictment of a whole group in a society is patently unjust and thoughtless.

The Jews are good workers, good trade-unionists, good physicians, good scientists, good philosophers, good musicians, good educators, good citizens. What, to repeat, is their offense as a race?

Their influence, according to Father Coughlin, is pernicious in politics and in social relations. In what way and why, one asks in vain. There are no bills of particulars worthy of the name! Has the influence of Governor Lehman, of the late Governor Horner of Illinois, of Justice Brandeis, of Justice Cardozo, of the late Julius Rosenwald, been pernicious? Has the influence of Albert Einstein, or of the Flexners, been pernicious, or that of the hundreds of gifted and able writers and artists?

The contributions of the Jews to knowledge, thought and letters have been notable, to say the least. Their contributions to the realm of beauty and grace have been equally important. Their bitterest foes cannot deny these plain statements of fact.

Are we, then, fully justified in asserting that there is absolutely *no* basis for anti-Semitism, and that this movement, or sentiment, is the product of sheer malignity and perversity? This, to be candid, is not the conclusion of judicious, enlightened and human gentiles. There is one real and serious grievance against the modern Jews of Europe and America which should be soberly faced and discussed with the view to constructive efforts at correction. The late Jane Addams, a woman whose sense of justice was unerring and who was as free from mere prejudice as any human being could possibly be, told the writer of this article that the Jews were not without some responsibility for the hostility toward them, even though others, not they, created the unfortunate situation out of which anti-Semitism had in part arisen and by which it had been fed. The Jews have, for many centuries, forsaken the soil, the agricultural way of life. Too large a proportion of them go into the liberal professions, and a still larger proportion into trade and business.

These facts are explicable in the light of history. The legal right to own and cultivate the soil has been denied the Jews of Russia, for instance, even in the pale of settlement. It seems irrational and cruel to drive a group into cities, force them into urban occupations, and then reproach them for alleged unwillingness to follow the plow. But human beings are not alway logical or consistent. The causes of an evil may be forgotten, the evil remains and becomes itself a potent cause of mischief and friction.

One-third of any social group should earn its living by farming—



for that is a good way of life even today. To neglect and reject that way of life is to invite the charge of shirking, of preferring to live by one's wits, of parasitism, in short.

Further, as Bacon pointed out, trade and commerce are associated in the popular mind with trickery, chicanery, fraud. That trade can be mutually advantageous, a perfectly fair exchange of products and services, is a modern concept, and not yet generally accepted. That under certain conditions of honorable competition neither party to a commercial operation need lose, and that the result may be full reciprocity, as well as social benefits, is an idea not easy to grasp when actually trade, commerce and finance are vitiated by a good deal of larceny and deception.

Now, the traders, even when strictly and scrupulously honest, suffer from the stigma attached to trade generally. The Jews, as traders, cannot escape that stigma. Honesty will not save them; the remedy is in far greater diversity of their occupations and means of livelihood. In Palestine, as we know, hosts of Jews have returned to the soil, and with considerable success economically and great benefit morally. Why not in America and in Europe, where policy and legislation do not discourage or forbid that solution?

As to liberal professions, they are deemed not only honorable but superior to all other vocations. But they are overcrowded, and the tendency of the Jews to "invade" them, complained of in some places—New York, for example—generates no little ill will and harsh criticism. That the Jews "dominate" any profession, is not true. That there are too many of them in law or medicine, and too few in engineering and agronomy, is undeniable.

The role of religion in stimulating and fostering anti-Semitism is steadily declining in importance among the educated and intelligent gentiles. The absurdity of hating the Jews of today for the condemnation and execution of the Nazarene prophet nearly 2,000 years ago, is too plain, as is the flagrant unfairness of indicting millions for the crime and blunder of a small clique of fanatics and bigots. The role of economics in perpetuating anti-Semitism is indisputably gaining in importance. Hence the solution, in so far as there is any, will have to be sought in the economic field. That was the considered view of Jane Addams, and it appears to be sound and wise.

It is not too late to turn in good faith, and systematically, to that civilized solution of the grave and menacing problem. Young Jewish students should be urged to take up agriculture and allied sciences and arts instead of law or medicine. Agriculture is passing through a crisis. Technology is revolutionizing it. In the future the soil will be more and more intensively cultivated, and farmers will have to adopt scientific methods to a degree scarcely realized today. The American frontier is gone, but opportunity is by no means gone, and there is still land to reclaim, to acquire and to enjoy, and, with land, independence, dignity and self-respect. Cooperation in farming need not be confined to Palestine. Modern ideas and modern techniques are as advisable and as promising in America as in Zion. The Jews have always been a progressive people, despite religious conservatism. They have had to develop the art of adaptation and adjustment to changing surroundings. In this country, at least, no thoughtful person expects them to abandon any principle they cherish, or to accept any compromise involving humiliation.

The steps indicated in the foregoing paragraphs are calculated to remove deep-seated prejudices, to promote harmony and understanding where now there are distrust, suspicion and vague fear.

Meantime, however, the fair-minded and conscientious gentiles might make certain indirect but substantial contributions to the solution of the problem. There is too much thoughtless talk in cultured and



civilized families about alleged Jewish traits of a repellent sort. The expression, "to jew them down," in referring to commercial transactions, is very familiar. It is a survival of an era long past. Today it makes no sense, and it engenders and breeds prejudice in the younger members of families. Similar expressions, carelessly uttered in conversation, without real malice, are often productive of considerable social harm. Why not avoid them in the interest of social peace and justice?

Finally, do liberal and progressive principles require democratic communities to tolerate gross, wholesale slander and libel against the Jewish ethnic group? Might not our statutes against criminal libel be revised and modernized by outlawing false and vicious charges against any and all groups of respectable and honorable citizens? We forbid and punish criminally certain libels leveled at individuals on the theory that such libels tend to cause disorder and violence. Is it less dangerous, less demoralizing, to libel whole groups, to lie about them, to inflame the ignorant and gullible against them? In Soviet Russia, anti-Semitism is regarded as "counter-revolutionary" and sternly suppressed. Is it not anti-American and anti-social to misrepresent and wilfully libel groups of innocent and useful citizens? The Bills of Rights is no license to print or utter criminal libels against *individuals*. The notion that *groups* are *not* entitled to like protection is strange and ethnically baseless. Scores of venomous anti-Semitic publications are allowed to spread false and wrong ideas about the Jews. Deprive them of the legal right to circulate such immoral and noxious libels, and they will wither away. It is false liberalism to refrain from any effective interference with them. Unity is undermined by deliberate lies and infamous charges against minorities in a community. The right of free speech and press does not include the right to promote discord and antagonism by means of unscrupulous falsehoods. Anti-Semitism is poison; it is subversive and destructive of civilized values. It should be discouraged and rendered hazardous in the extreme.

In the new order, the truly good society, democracy must protect itself and prevent the planting of the seeds of hate, division, suspicion and brutality.



## NEEDED EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

Volumes and articles without number have been written in recent years on and about our educational system. The conservatives have demanded a return to classical and so-called humanistic education; the progressives have been advocating radical changes in line with their dynamic philosophy of life and society. All concede that in the last several decades desirable and by no means slight reforms have been effected in education—for example, more attention to the body of the pupil or student, better courses in civics and economics, closer relations between the school and the factory, mine, and office. Further, teachers are less arbitrary, less dogmatic, less bookish. There is more discussion in the classroom, more study of current topics and journals of opinion.

Now, these changes are commendable and wholesome, whatever our ideas about the deeper educational problems may be. And it is certain that further reforms of the same kind will be effected in the future by well-nigh common consent. Education is shaped and molded by life, and life is not static.

Yet certain necessary and important reforms in education, all the way from the primary school to the college, university, and professional school, need more active sponsorship and greater emphasis. Some of these are overlooked in the livelier controversies in the educational realm. It is my purpose to treat of these here.

Despite recent trends, education is still too fragmentary, scrappy, disjointed and miscellaneous. Young men and women are still able to graduate without having "taken" adequate courses in political science, in economics, in ethics, and philosophy. The elective system, which had some merit under thoughtful administration was so glaringly abused in some colleges that not even now has the process of correction and reconstruction reached the worst vices of the system. A good deal of the chatter about the unwisdom of imposing this or that subject, of course, on students unwilling or unable to absorb them and benefit by them is, as H. G. Wells has contended for years, sheer moonshine. It is not the faculty that imposes subjects—it is life itself, the stage of civilization, or barbarism, we live in, the very structure and nature of the universe.

The average boy or girl cannot select his or her studies intelligently. It is absurd, therefore, to appeal in education to the principle of free choice or intellectual and moral self-determination. It is the business of the mature to guide the young and inexperienced in matters of education and preparation for life and work. Within very narrow limits only is the elective system admissible. Certain minor subjects, though interesting and useful, are certainly not essential to the lay citizen—Egyptology, for example, or Greek, or Hebrew, or Spanish, or Chinese art.

No one should be graduated from any college or professional school who has not studied economics, politics ethics, history and philosophy. Without philosophy there is no approximation to a synthesis, to a world view, to an enlightened attitude toward individual membership in a community, a nation, an international culture, and any collective security system.

We do not demand enough of our school children or students. We allow them, indeed encourage them, to waste much of their time. France has demonstrated that the young can work harder and give a better account of themselves than our youth has done. The ideal of a sound mind in a sound body is not inconsistent with harder work in school or college. Recreation is necessary, but not commercialized and over-organized recreation. Let students be advised to take exercise—to walk,



run, dance, play tennis and ball, swim, ride, drive—but intercollegiate contests should be intellectual, not physical. The enthusiasm of aging alumni for football matches is juvenile and silly. Reform this type of sport altogether. It has no place in the educational scheme of a civilized society.

All teaching must be vitalized and related to the actual problems of today and tomorrow. We can learn something from history, but the profoundest educators, including Professor Whitehead, have warned us not to lean unduly on historical analogies and parallels. Even ancient ideas have to be applied very carefully in the light of contemporary conditions and relationships. We cannot build a new society on the foundations of Plato's Republic. That republic, we are told by some scholars, was a picture of heaven, not of our poor little planet; but there is no geographic heaven, and to improve such republics or constitutional monarchies, or soviet-socialist regimes, as we *have* developed, Plato's picture is of very little use to us. We cannot restore slavery, we do not believe in philosopher-kings, or in banishing poets from our communities, or abolishing private wives and children for the governing elite. Plato cannot recommend measures for the prevention of mass unemployment, or for maintaining full production, or for extending the democratic principle to industrial, commercial, and financial affairs. He cannot persuade the employers to sign union-shop contracts, or trade unions to clean house and eliminate racketeering and dishonesty. Plato's noblest and most beautiful ideas are simply not relevant to our situation, for opinions diverge as to the bearing of those ideas on our complex and peculiar problems.

Education may be vitalized, and should be vitalized, by establishing closer contacts between the school on the one hand, and, on the other, the factory, the shop, the mine, the office, the trade union, the various local and general governments, and administrative bodies. Students, in addition to lectures and textbooks, should learn how men and women work, fight, vote, get their adult political and other education. An able and sound article in the Summer, 1945, issue of *The American Scholar*, by a professor, urges the establishment and cultivation of such contacts. It suggests that students be encouraged to get jobs in vacation periods, or part-time employment while attending classes, with labor officials, regulatory commissions, ward organizations, chambers of commerce, crime commissions, and the like, and be given credit for the work thus done and the information thus gathered and brought into the classroom. This proposal is thoroughly feasible, and if carried out intelligently, it could not fail to yield very substantial advantages.

Education, no matter how good, must be adjudged a failure if it does not develop an irresistible desire to continue study, reading, and reflection *after* graduation, all through the span of life. Our efforts at adult education are better than no effort at all, but they are woefully insufficient and fragmentary. Thanks to radio, we can now extend and improve our adult education. We can have classes and lectures in all the social sciences and fine arts for all sorts and conditions of men and women. Many lectures or seminar discussions can be broadcast, as opera and symphonic music are broadcast, and millions of pupils thus added to those now reached. The shocking amount of piffle and rubbish supplied by radio should dramatize the question of requiring of radio chains and stations more attention to cultural, esthetic and socially profitable subjects. The air should not be all but monopolized by the commercial purveyors of merchandise and patent medicines. A radio license should be granted on certain reasonable conditions only, and the standards of entertainment and amusement should be gradually raised—at the expense of vulgar jazz, sentimental mush of no literary or dramatic merit, and the like. It hardly needs saying that the offensive abuses of raw blatant commercialism in advertising should be reduced to a tolerable minimum.



Finally, we must give serious thought to the role of the daily and weekly press as "educator." Late tendencies have notoriously degraded and corrupted this press. It is Big Business. It is plutocratic, reactionary and deliberately hostile to labor and to constructive liberalism. Its influence—apart from the editorial pages—is still strong and far-reaching. It suppresses certain kinds of news, thus preventing facts and truth from doing their normal work—removing prejudices, correcting wrong impressions, combating anti-social trends. Many papers slant news and refuse to publish protests against misrepresentations. Many papers manage to attract huge circulations by sensationalism, gossip, comic strips, sport reports, cartoons, exploitation of crimes and scandals, and heavy advertising. Insidiously, in a hundred ways, they *miseducate* the less discriminating readers. An intelligent, honest, moderately progressive newspaper or weekly is a real and valuable educator. Alas, we now have *few* papers or weeklies of this type. What steps can be taken by labor, the liberal and evolutionary radical elements in the country, and the sincere and progressive church groups, toward notable and substantial improvement of the unfortunate press situation? The answer to this vital question must be reserved for another time and occasion.



## BENJAMIN R. TUCKER AND PHILOSOPHICAL ANARCHISM

Not long ago, at Monaco, an American thinker passed away and was buried "unwept, unhonored and unsung." He was 85 years old when he thus died in obscurity, and for about 30 years his name had hardly appeared in print or been mentioned in advanced liberal or radical circles. That man was Benjamin R. Tucker, the father of the American school of individualistic, pacific and philosophical anarchism, and for 30 years the editor of *Liberty*, the leading organ of that school of social thought.

Tucker was 50 years of age when, owing to unfortunate financial circumstances (a fire which destroyed his printing shop, a reduction in his income from investments, etc.), he decided to suspend publication of *Liberty* and retire from active propagandist activity. He went to Europe, settled in Nice with his small family, and led a quiet life, reading, carrying on some correspondence, and gambling a little at Monte Carlo. He seldom published anything of consequence, but it appears that he never appreciably modified his philosophy.

Despite the world war, the Russian revolution, the rise and spread of fascism, the collapse of the German republic and the emergence of Hitlerian barbarism, Tucker remained a philosophical anarchist. In that philosophy alone humanity might find salvation—and some day, he was convinced, will and shall find it. Socialism may be tried, but it will fail. Compromise, half-measures, palliatives, were certain to be adopted, but none of them would avert catastrophe. The world must, after tragic and costly blunders, reach the conclusion that only philosophical anarchism provides a firm foundation for a stable, just and progressive social, political and economic system.

Professor Paul Douglas of the University of Chicago, who in his student days interested himself in the literature of philosophical anarchism, told the present writer a few years ago that Tucker and his school were a characteristic product of the last two or three decades of the 19th century, and have no message for our period and our society. No doubt many educated persons share his opinion. It is a plausible one, but one wonders whether it is the last word on the subject. May not time and tide qualify it, perhaps even reverse it?

At any rate, now that Tucker is dead; that no movement labeled philosophical anarchism exists anywhere, it may be instructive and useful to tell briefly the story of philosophical anarchism, and in the light of the facts of this story ask ourselves whether or not the essential doctrines and ideas of that American school are today, in truth, irrelevant and immaterial.

Herbert Spencer asserted in his famous essay, "Man versus the State," that the state was "conceived in aggression and maintained by aggression," and that majority rule was as crass a superstition as autocracy. There Spencer stopped. To a minimum of government he did not object, regarding it, with Jefferson, as a necessary evil. Tucker refused to stop at that point. He would not, he declared, palter with evil. He would improve upon Jefferson and Spencer and repudiate *all* government of man by man. He would not under any circumstances coerce the *non-invasive* individual. All forms and types of social organization ought to be wholly voluntary. Taxation and national defense should not be treated as exceptions to that sovereign principle.

Tucker therefore demanded the gradual abolition of the state and the substitution for it of voluntary cooperation for all purposes found necessary or desirable. The last state function to go, he conceded, would



be the protective or police function. The first, in all probability, would be the protective tariff system.

Tucker asserted that he was an "unterrified Jeffersonian democrat." He quoted Sir Henry Maine to the effect that historical political evolution was at bottom the process of doing away with *status* and establishing instead the regime of *free contract*. In progressive societies, he argued, religion, art, letters and social intercourse were not in any way controlled by the state. In these vital fields men were free to cooperate or to decline to cooperate. Anarchy prevailed therein, and the effects were splendid. Hence it was irrational to affirm that in other spheres compulsion was necessary, and voluntary cooperation unsafe and insufficient.

It should be noted here that Tucker's Quaker upbringing and environment led him, perhaps unconsciously, to go beyond his masters and guides in abjuring not only direct coercion but also indirect use of compulsion. He was of course opposed to revolution, but he was equally emphatic in condemning all participation in or collaboration with the state and its activities. To vote at any election was immoral. To vote is "to govern." Behind the ballot box is the constable and the soldier. Boycott the state; let the dead bury the dead. The consistent logical anarchist must choose superior or more ethical methods of furthering his ideal.

In his economic teaching, Tucker follows Proudhon for the most part, but Josiah Warren and Spencer also contributed thereto. Warren, who was not a scholar, had independently worked out the Marxian theory of surplus value. He was familiar with the labor theory of value, but, unlike the classical economists, he advocated the abolition of rent, interest and profits. Cost should be "the limit of price." Cost to Warren meant average labor cost, and anything above that was in Proudhon's words "robbery,"—exploitation of labor by some form of state-protected monopoly. Spencer, in his radical days, favored the abolition of landlordism, protective tariffs and banking and currency restrictions. Proudhon, like Marx, denounced as robbery all monopoly rent and all interest on capital. He proposed, and even organized, experimental, mutual banks for the financing of cooperative industry. Proudhon, it will be remembered, contended that the present capitalistic system could be undermined and gotten rid of by the proper and scientific organization of credit, or by free and mutual banking. That, he held, was to be the real, the authentic "revolution of the 19th century."

Tucker's platform, in accordance with these views, called for free trade, free banking, free land, free industry and the repeal of all patent and copyright statutes. Monopoly would thus be overthrown at its sources, and keen competition would take its place and make for ever increasing efficiency. Poverty, Tucker argued, was caused by monopoly, not by competition, and monopoly was deliberately created and fostered by the state. The government, he insisted, was, to use Marx's words, the executive committee of the monopolies, the plutocrats. He liked to brand the monopolists as "the brotherhood of thieves." He thoroughly agreed with Proudhon that under capitalism and monopoly, property *was* robbery.

Again, therefore, abolition of the state was necessary if economic justice and economic democracy were to be brought about by intelligent and systematic efforts. Not *new* legislation, but repeal of all *existing* legislation by and for the monopolies was the only effective remedy for present iniquities and inequalities.

Since Tucker was opposed to violence, to political action, and to legislation of a positive kind it was incumbent upon him to propose newer and different methods. He cheerfully assumed the burden of proof.

In the first place, he never failed to emphasize the need for education, the "spreading of the light." The state existed in the minds of the



masses. It had to be discredited and ousted from those minds. Hence education was a primary and all-important weapon in the fight against the state.

In the second place, *passive* resistance to the government could be offered by various small groups and even by individuals, without waiting for the conversion of the majority. This involved refusal to pay taxes and going to jail, if necessary. (Tucker never paid taxes on personal property.) However, the refusal to pay taxes should be proclaimed fearlessly and accompanied by a clear, vigorous statement of the reason for such action. This would be a most dramatic form of public education, or "propaganda by deed."

What is true of education is true also of military service, of quasi-military duties and even of trial by jury. The anarchist should allege conscientious objections to the performance of all such duties, and should go to prison, if necessary. Such non-cooperation with the state, such civil disobedience, such non-violent resistance would naturally challenge public attention and excite sympathy in circles which might not approve of force.

In time, anti-rent strikes on the Irish model of the last century would become feasible and expedient. A strike against land monopoly and rent is at once a strike against the landlords and a protest against the laws which sanction monopoly in land and other natural resources.

Interest on capital cannot be successfully fought by any kind of strike or boycott. It can be fought by and through the organization and patronage of mutual, cooperative banks and credit institutions. Trade unions, cooperatives and other associations should operate banks and extend credit on non-capitalistic terms and conditions.

Patent and copyright privileges, finally, can be attacked by disregard of all the legislation creating them and by repeated infringements. The beneficiaries of these legal privileges would thus be forced to institute ruinous law suits.

No attempt will be made in this paper to state and answer all the major objections which Tucker had to meet and dispose of in the three decades of his propagandist activity. Only a few of such objections can be considered here.

"How would you prevent and punish crime under anarchism?" was a question often put to him by all manner of persons. The answer, in general terms, was this: Voluntary protective societies would be organized to insure members against loss through crime. Private police forces would be organized to apprehend and detain men guilty of crime, and impartial juries would try them. The private protective organizations could compete with one another for members, and thus develop efficiency. In the long run, in all probability, one such society would meet the requirements of the community. Trial by jury would mean trial by a certain panel representing the whole community. The jury would determine the penalty to be imposed in any case. Crime would be reduced to a minimum, chiefly because poverty would have been eliminated, but the few persons who, by reason of moral instability or low mentality, would commit anti-social acts, would be fairly tried and adequately punished.

What is crime under anarchism? Nothing but *deliberate violation of the law of equal freedom*. The criminal code would be simple and reasonable. Legal procedure would be rational and intelligible. Convicted persons would be treated humanely and most first offenses would be overlooked. No normal person could take exception to the criminal code as conceived by philosophical anarchism.

But is not punishment another name for government, and is not the anarchist glaringly inconsistent in professing to dispense with *all* government of man by man if he believes in restraint and punishment of persons deemed anti-social?



These objections were raised persistently in many quarters, radical as well as conservative. Tucker always patiently explained that they were based on a fundamental misapprehension. The objectors failed to bear in mind his *definition* of government. He employed the term government to denote interference with and compulsory control of the peaceful, non-invasive and well-behaved individual. The restraint and punishment of a wilful invader or violator of the law of equal freedom was not what *he* called government. He did not oppose resistance to aggression. He did not reject all compulsion. But under anarchism the use of compulsion was limited to instances where the principle of equality of freedom was deliberately violated.

Another question frequently raised was this:—that anarchism practically precluded and frowned upon *all* forms of social organization, and that to contemplate and plan organizations for all sorts of purposes was tantamount to sacrificing individual sovereignty and complete freedom of action.

Again, Tucker pointed out, such an objection ignored his definition of anarchism. Anarchism condemns *compulsory* organization only; it fully recognizes the need and utility of voluntary organization for many purposes—protective, economic, cultural and recreational. A free individual does not renounce his sovereignty by entering into contracts with other free individuals. The free individual is not necessarily a recluse or hermit. He may and will join any association which enables him to enrich his life, to save time or energy, and to enjoy things which are inaccessible to isolated individuals. He will submit to rules and regulations which a society of free men finds expedient for the transaction of business. He will abide by the decisions of a majority, or a chairman, while retaining his membership in an organization. Should he conclude, however, that the constitution and by-laws of a society he has joined unduly restrict his freedom; if the game is not worth the candle, in short, he will resign. The test in any given case is the right to resign or to secede. The state does not recognize the right of secession or of resignation. Thus there can be no anarchistic state, but there is ample room for cooperation and organized action under anarchism.

Tucker's following was never large, but it was impressive for its quality. Lawyers of distinction, writers, journalists, ministers, physicians, engineers, and labor leaders embraced his gospel and declared that he was giving expression to their own half-formulated sentiments. Not all of them quite approved of the term anarchism. The popular and dictionary definitions of that term, they believed, rendered it inadvisable to use it. Why, they asked, court misunderstanding and waste time on futile controversies when a more acceptable term—namely Individualism—was available? But Tucker remained adamant. He had no patience with timidity. He defied popular superstition and fallacies. He would stoop to no compromises. Anarchism, as Proudhon first used the term in his book, *What is Property?*, was in every way satisfactory to him. He said that it was accurate and scientific.

From England, from France, from Germany, from Australia and from Russia, letters, messages and subscriptions came to encourage Tucker and give him confidence. A British disciple of Spencer, Auberon Herbert, sent him a remarkable pamphlet entitled *A Politician in Sight of Heaven*, in which this wealthy and respected ex-member of Parliament indicted republican and democratic forms of government and declared compulsory taxation to be the taproot of graft, corruption and inefficiency in government, and advocated voluntary taxation and voluntary military service under all circumstances. The eminent French geographer, Elisee Reclus, sent Tucker a pamphlet of his in which anarchistic ideas were ably and forefully set forth.

Several anarchistic journals were launched in America and in England to preach anarchism, but *Liberty* remained until the end a journal-



istic paragon. It was admired by Bernard Shaw, who sent it a brilliant article; by Wordsworth Donisthorpe, the editor of *Jus*, an organ of rather conservative British individualism and by John Henry Mack-aye, the Scottish-German poet and novelist, who espoused anarchism and preached it in Germany.

For more than a decade Tucker carried on his propaganda in orthodox ethical terms. One could feel the Quaker in all his utterances. He was an Atheist, but his utilitarianism was touched with high moral fervor. He spoke earnestly of right and wrong. Human rights, he declared, were "an august thing." It was a sin to support government. It was the duty of the right-thinking person to work for the gradual overthrow of the state.

Suddenly a great and unfortunate change came over the spirit and manner of Tucker's propaganda. This change was the result of his acquaintance with a book at that time scarcely known in America—Max Stirner's "Der Einzige und Seine Eigenthum." Tucker read it in an English translation and swallowed its thesis as if it were a revelation from heaven. Stirner dismissed all ethical concepts with utter contempt. Right and wrong were to him meaningless terms. Nothing was moral and nothing immoral. We should all be ashamed, unrepentant egoists. A thing was either useful to us or useless. We like a thing or we dislike it. We should always please ourselves and pursue our own happiness, albeit with prudence and care. To Stirner utilitarian ethics was only a little less superstitious than theological ethics. Altruism was egoism in a different form. One did a thing because it yielded him pleasure or averted anticipated pain. The anarchist wanted a different social order not because he was better or nobler than the non-anarchist, but because he and others would be more comfortable, freer and happier in that new order. The anarchist's aims, as well as his methods, were dictated by consideration of enlightened expediency. *Liberty* thus became an organ of egoism as well as of philosophical anarchism.

Max Stirner's crude and over-simplified view of human behavior is scarcely entertainable today. Social psychology and social philosophy, particularly as developed in the last 20 years, render it childish and grotesquely inadequate. Tucker's impulsive acceptance of it astonished and alienated some of his most enlightened and cultivated adherents. He parted with them in sorrow, even in anger. He deplored their lingering "superstitions." To be a consistent and logical anarchist, you have to be a complete egoist.

It is wonderfully easy to point out flaws and fallacies in the foregoing complex of ideas. To most contemporary thinkers, philosophical anarchism is distinctly *unphilosophical* and *unscientific*. It is of the utopian variety of radicalism—visionary, arbitrary, metaphysical and without foundation in history. Human nature, as we know it today, mocks all efforts to prescribe for it this or that abstractly wise course. It is indifferent to logic, and it is idle to quarrel with it. As Spinoza said, it is foolish to groan over it, or to exult in it; our business is to understand it.

Today it is clear to all sober-minded thinkers that the new social order—and a new order *is* actually emerging—will be socialistic or collectivist in character. For a time socialism apparently is bound to be paternalistic and bureaucratic. Many liberals and radicals are not at all enthusiastic about that phase of socialism. It sacrifices value which we cherish. It stresses economic improvement and minimizes cultural and spiritual needs. It makes for greater equality but not for greater freedom. But this phase of socialism is not likely to last. The ideal of human freedom is not dead. Economic democracy and political and intellectual freedom are *not* irreconcilable. Socialism will gradually free itself of the



bureaucratic and paternalistic elements. The philosophy of anarchism will be revived. Many contemporary thinkers are in fact anarchists without knowing it, or at least, without using that name or label. They believe in individual sovereignty. They refuse to worship and deify the state, or to bow to the mythical "collective will." They accept majority rule and work with or under governments which they know to be imperfect—incompetent, wasteful, confused and tyrannical, but they will work and fight for the maximum of liberty compatible with social peace and social harmony. They will work pragmatically to raise the standards of government and to make it more democratic as well as more efficient.

Meantime it is the duty and privilege of libertarians to preserve as much individual, group and local freedom as possible under any regime. Totalitarianism, so-called, which is simply another name for absolute tyranny, must be fought and discredited. Liberty is a principle, not a dogma. The amount of it at any given time depends on conditions, but it must never be lost sight of. War or revolution, as a rule, destroys liberty. But war and revolution are at times inevitable, hence the necessity of cherishing the ideal of maximum liberty.

In France, it is interesting to note, there has been of late a marked revival of interest in Proudhon's teachings. They are preferred by the younger thinkers to syndicalism, which is undergoing a decline. In England, Fabianism is apparently in a state of eclipse. It is too provincial. As H. G. Wells once observed, it is the philosophy of civil servants who are notoriously timid and disinclined to uncertainty and adventure. Guild socialism has largely superseded it, and guild socialism is more libertarian and more congenial to independent spirits. In the United States, independent, non-dogmatic radicalism is widespread nowadays, while the dogmatic schools of socialism make little progress and remain alien to the American temperament. The American, it has been truly said, is a born pragmatist. American collectivism is certain to be less rigid, less mechanical, and less bureaucratic than that of any other country.

American philosophical anarchists may—and doubtless will—acquiesce in large concessions to collectivism, but on the other hand, the collectivists and socialists who wish to wield influence and to be more than isolated sectarians will have to embrace the basic concepts of philosophical and individualistic anarchism.



## WHAT IS LEFT OF MARXISM?

The ideas and teachings of Karl Marx, the founder of what has been proudly, indeed aggressively, called Scientific Socialism—as distinguished from utopian sentimental, bourgeois, or Christian Socialism—have been repeatedly “revised” in the past four decades. The work began in Germany, was continued in England and is now vigorously pursued in this country by thinkers who claim to be sound and loyal Socialists. Wilson, Eastman, Hook, and others are among these vigorous revisionists. The importance of this work, theoretically as well as practically, is felt by schools of economists, sociologists, and reformers who have not labeled themselves Socialists. To expose or puncture fallacies and paradoxes in *any* school of thought is to promote clear thinking in *all* schools.

Let us ask what is now deemed essential in Marxism and consider what the effect of criticism has been upon it, or upon each of its ingredients and elements, some of which, we know, were not original with Marx.

Let us take, first, *Dialectical Materialism*. The dogmatic, the die-hard Marxists cling desperately to this doctrine, but it is thoroughly discredited now. It was acquired by Marx when he was under the influence of Hegelian metaphysics and philosophy. It was the result of a combination of place, time, and circumstances. French Socialists, British Socialists, Italian and Spanish Socialists knew it not and never developed the slightest interest in it. It is totally unnecessary to Socialism: it is excess baggage, a source of embarrassment and confusion. The notion that all history illustrates the struggle of thesis and antithesis, with the synthesis as the happy ending of the human drama, is arbitrary, empty of vital content, and worthless from any realistic point of view. To assure us that primitive communities were integrated and harmonious, constituting the “thesis,” that feudalism, capitalism, imperialism, Fascism severally and together constitute the “antithesis,” and that the classless, socialized society of the future will constitute the “synthesis,” is not to offer us the slightest aid in solving our intricate problems. Was primitive society beautifully harmonious? Was it classless? And, even if it was, why stop at that point and denominate *it* the thesis? Why not go back to the cave man and predict a destruction of civilization and culture, and a return to savagery and chaos? Spenglerism has much more support in the facts of history than the Marxian synthetic paradise!

Besides, how many more phases is the current antithesis to undergo? How long shall humanity have to wait for the dawn of the synthesis? Engels thought some 80 years ago that the German people could not stand more than “one more revolution.” Well, they have had to stand more than “one more revolution,” and the end is not yet. It is idle to pretend that Nazism does not contain painful surprises for the followers of Marx. True, he and his colleagues of the middle of the last century expected determined and bitter opposition to Socialism from the upper and middle classes, but they did not expect the *kind* of opposition, or the actual alignment of forces, which Nazism developed. Their analysis of the social forces was woefully inadequate and defective. Their dialectical materialism failed them completely. The synthesis is indefinitely postponed. The whole concept, to repeat, is so useless that it had better be scrapped and forgotten.

*The Economic Interpretation of History*. Many learned critics of



Marx, as well as many adherents of his, never understood this feature of Marxism. They attributed to it views that Marx never entertained, and was, in fact, careful to repudiate. He never held that we are governed by economic motives alone. He never asserted that religion, ethics, politics, and the fine arts were wholly determined by and subservient to the system of production and distribution of commodities. He recognized the great influence and apparent autonomy of these great departments of human activity. He knew that man does not live by bread alone, and that economic interests are often subordinated by individuals and groups to religious convictions or moral ideals. But he and his co-workers did assert that the system of production was the most powerful of all the factors which constantly and profoundly affected and shaped all other social institutions. This proposition is now accepted by most economists, though, perhaps, with more qualifications than Marx himself would consider valid and sound. There are events and accidents in history for which the economic system does not fully account. There are what Professor Oman has called cataclysmic personages who lead or drive whole nations for certain periods and bring about far-reaching changes in the distribution of power, natural resources, and populations. Alexander the Great, Caesar, and Napoleon were cataclysmic personalities. Again, technology may produce momentous social and political readjustments. But, on the whole, it is undeniable that Marx's economic interpretation has thrown a brilliant light on history, and is a permanent and notable contribution.

*The Class Struggle.* Classes there have been, and there still are, but to aver that history is a record of class struggles is an absurd oversimplification. Class divisions have been inevitable. Gross inequalities of wealth, cultural and educational inequalities, intellectual inequalities—all these make for class divisions. The decay of some classes and the capture of power by other classes are phenomena correctly enough described as revolutionary. Today, plutocracy, not aristocracy; wealth, not land or title, are dominant. All this is well understood. But are the wage-workers a distinct class; would their ascendancy spell the end of the class struggle and the founding of a classless society, as Marx contended? The answer is by no means clear or certain.

In the first place, millions of wage-workers are *not* class-conscious. They believe themselves to belong to the middle class. They do not expect their children to remain wage-workers, even if they themselves see no prospect of climbing up the social ladder and becoming bosses, contractors, what not. Their psychology is decidedly middle class, though they may be good union men. They are in no sense foes of the capitalistic system.

Below them is what the Germans call the *lumpenproletaria*—willing servants and tools of the rich, powerful, and arrogant elements. These hosts are brutal, stupid, and destructive, and play no part in the progressive movements. They are more likely to join the counter-revolutionary than the revolutionary forces in times of stress and crisis. From them are recruited strike-breakers, informers, thugs, gangsters, and the like. Racketeers use them. Labor has no worse enemies.

It is sheer nonsense to assert, after a century of experience, that labor is a revolutionary force, awaiting only the courageous leadership of an elite, an advance guard of trained and educated soldiers of progress. Such phrases as these have a hollow sound. The dogmatists who continue to repeat them imagine vain things and have no contact with reality. Let a fanatical orator tell a representative labor audience that they "have nothing to lose but their chains," and they will stare at him and think him half-mad, at least. Millions of wage-workers have homes, good jobs, bank account, insurance policies, and other substantial stakes in the existing social order.

In the second place, many progressives are not interested in, or at-



tracted by, any picture of a classless society. What they want and are willing to work and fight for is justice for all, a decent standard of living for all who toil, equal opportunity. That is a reliable goal, while the classless society is a vague dream. There is no moral objection, moreover, to social divisions not based on exploitation, on unfair privilege, on legal or illegal plunder.

*Surplus Value.* All schools of Socialism hold that rent, interest, and profits are forms of "surplus value"—unearned income that justly belongs to labor, from the manager and active enterpriser down to the janitor and watchman. Marx contributed nothing original to his basic concept. Economic science has not been able to find a reasonable justification for monopoly rent, for monopoly interest, for the profits of those so-called employers who do little, if anything, for the success of the industry or business they nominally operate. A director who directs is worthy of his hire. A manager who manages is entitled to good pay. But such wages are not profits, and industry does not need the "profit motive." Pay for useful service may be liberal, but it does not tend to create millionaires.

To attack land monopoly, credit monopoly, banking monopoly, and trade monopoly is not to attack private ownership or private property. Marx and his disciples never recognized the important distinction between *monopoly* and property acquired in a truly free market. They were incredibly blind to the pernicious effects of land monopoly, and they seem to have had no comprehension of the modern credit and currency problem.

Marxism has helped us to understand the nature of capitalism, and the rise and decline of that economic order. But today the fact that capitalism is sick, bankrupt, unable to solve its deeper problems, and therefore certain to be superseded, is fully grasped by many who are not Marxians, by many who are not even materialists. Idealism is not incompatible with Socialism. The agnostic and the devoutly religious person can and do work together for a better and healthier economic order. The engineer, interested chiefly in efficiency, reaches the same conclusion as the scientific humanitarian, who is interested in justice and the general welfare. There are today many mansions in the house of rational Socialism. The Marxists are more utopian than some of the other schools, less realistic, less effective in their propaganda.















